



RESOLUTION ON GUI MINHAI (CHINA)

Gui Minhai – a Swedish citizen – is a poet, author, book publisher and is one of the “Causeway Bay Bookstore Five,” a group of five booksellers affiliated with Causeway Bay Books and its owner, Mighty Current Media who disappeared between October and December 2015. Mighty Current Media is a Hong Kong-based publishing company best known for its sensational books about Chinese leaders’ private lives. Such books are banned in mainland China, but legal in Hong Kong. Causeway Bay Bookstore was similarly well-known as a bookstore offering such banned books.

Gui Minhai first disappeared from his beach house in Thailand on 17 October 2015 and later resurfaced in mainland China; it is believed that he was abducted and brought to China against his will. While four of the five men have subsequently released, Gui Minhai remains in mainland police custody.

When Gui Minhai disappeared from his holiday home in Thailand in October 2015 there was no trace of him until he appeared on state-controlled TV in the People’s Republic of China three months later where he said that he had voluntarily returned to China to turn himself in for a traffic-related offence dating back to 2003.¹ He claimed he did not want any support from the Swedish government. It is believed that this confession was forced. In several subsequently televised confessions of other members of the Causeway Bay Bookstore Five, it was revealed that Gui Minhai might be under investigation for running an illegal business operation, in connection with distributing unlicensed books in mainland China.

In October 2017 Gui Minhai was released from prison and was placed under strict surveillance, living in a flat in Ningbo. Although there is no indication that he was ever convicted of a crime, he was reportedly released as he was considered to have served his sentence for the alleged traffic incident. His access to the internet and communication with the outside world was limited, despite assurances from the Chinese authorities, on a number of occasions, that he was a free man and that the Swedish authorities could have any contact they wished with their fellow citizen.²

After alarming signals that Gui Minhai might be suffering from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) the Swedish embassy arranged for him to be examined by a medical team at the embassy in Beijing. On 20 January 2018, he was being accompanied by two Swedish diplomats on the train from Shanghai to

¹ <https://youtu.be/QxxY73pY6QE>

² <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2130435/china-detained-bookseller-gui-minhai-stop-him-telling>

Beijing, when ten plain clothes police officers boarded the train and dragged him away in front of the two diplomats.³ His whereabouts were once again unknown until a statement, on 6 February, by a spokesperson from the Chinese foreign ministry declared that Gui Minhai was subjected to “criminal coercive measures”, a term generally used to mean detention.⁴

To date, Gui Minhai has reportedly not been granted access to legal counsel, has had almost no access to visits by Swedish consular officials, and has had no contact with his family. We believe that Gui Minhai is being held on account of the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

The Assembly of Delegates of PEN International calls on the government of the People’s Republic of China to:

- Remember their obligations under Article 35 of the Chinese Constitution and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), reminding them that as a signatory to the ICCPR, China is obliged to ‘refrain from acts that would defeat or undermine the treaty’s objective and purpose’;
- Grant Gui Minhai access to adequate health care, as necessary or requested, as well as access to his family, a lawyer of his choosing, and the Swedish consulate, while he remains in detention.
- Grant the immediate and unconditional release of Gui Minhai, and to fully respect the civil rights guaranteed in the Chinese Constitution.

³ See <https://pen-international.org/news/china-pen-calls-on-the-authorities-to-disclose-publishers-whereabouts>

⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-hongkong-sweden/china-confirms-swedish-citizen-and-hk-bookseller-in-detention-idUSKBN1FQ0VY>