

URGENT ACTION

CHINESE DIRECTOR ARRESTED FOR PROTEST FILM

Chen Pinlin is the director of the documentary, 'Urumqi Middle Road' (乌鲁木齐中路), which captures scenes from the nationwide "White Paper Movement", a series of peaceful protests against three years of rolling lockdowns under China's zero-COVID policy and the harsh environment of censorship and surveillance in China. Chen uploaded the documentary to the Internet around the one-year anniversary of the White Paper Movement. He was arrested on January 5, 2024 and is being held in the Baoshan Detention Center in Shanghai on charges of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble". Chen may face five years in prison if convicted.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 37.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

Chief Procurator Chen Yong
Shanghai People's Procuratorate
75 Jian'guo West Rd, Shanghai, 200020
People's Republic of China

Chinese Embassy in the United States
Ambassador Xie Fang
3505 International Place, NW, Washington DC 20008
Phone: (202) 495-2266
Email: chinaembpress_us@mfa.gov.cn

Dear Chief Procurator Chen,

In 2022-2023, **Chen Pinlin** (陈品霖), also known as Plato, created and released the documentary called 'Urumqi Middle Road' (乌鲁木齐中路). This documentary records a series of peaceful protests against three years of rolling lockdowns under China's zero-COVID policy and the harsh environment of censorship and surveillance in China.

I am writing to express my grave concern for Chen's well-being. On January 5, 2024, police in Shanghai arrested him for "picking quarrels and provoking trouble". Chen is currently being held in pre-trial detention at the Baoshan Detention Center in Shanghai. While in custody, Chen is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment, as well as violations of his due process rights.

Chen's family has reportedly been harassed and intimidated by the police, which is also a common trend with cases of detained defenders in China. Since the White Paper Movement, several other participants or their families have been harassed and questioned by Chinese authorities.

Chen Pinlin is being detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression. Therefore, I urge you to release Chen Pinlin immediately and unconditionally. Pending his release, I urge you to ensure he is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. Finally, I urge you to stop threatening, harassing, and arresting Chen's family, other individuals associated with the White Paper Movement, and anyone who peacefully exercises their rights to freedom of expression and association.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During the White Paper Movement, Chen and his friends shot a large number of videos at Urumqi Middle Road, the site of a large protest in Shanghai. Around the first anniversary of the White Paper Movement in November 2023, Chen finalized and uploaded his footage as a documentary called Urumqi Middle Road, also called Not the Foreign Force, to the Internet.

In late November 2023, Chen Pinlin was detained by the Chinese authorities for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble”. On January 5, 2024, Chen was formally arrested on the same charge; he is currently being held at the Baoshan Detention Center. On February 18, his case was transferred to the prosecutor's office for prosecution.

This is the second case of arrest for sharing information about the White Paper Movement that Amnesty International has been able to document. The first was that of a Uyghur university student Kamile Wayit; information about her case is available [here](#). Amnesty believes that many more reports of detention, arrests, or disappearances linked to the protests in November 2022 may be credible. Due to the swift and harsh response of authorities, however, the true number and scope of cases linked to the White Paper Movement is likely impossible to determine.

Amnesty has documented torture and ill-treatment in places of detention in China since at least 2015, with the report [No end in sight - Torture and forced confessions in China](#), and most recently in the China entry of the [2023 Annual Report](#).

About the White Paper Movement or “A4 Protest” in China

On November 24, 2022, a fire broke out in an apartment building in Urumqi, killing at least 10 people, according to government sources. Many blamed Covid-19 restrictions for the deaths but local authorities disputed this claim. This did not stop protests from breaking out in Urumqi, the capital of the western region of Xinjiang. After the fire, the government declared that the Covid-19 outbreak was under control and the city would ease lockdowns, following more than 100 days of severe restrictions on people's movement.

On November 25, a student from the Nanjing Media College reportedly protested on campus holding a white sheet of paper and other students joined. The action quickly spread across the country, with videos shared on social media showing protests breaking out across universities and cities throughout China, including in Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Wuhan.

Peaceful protesters commemorated the victims of the Urumqi fire and called for the easing of lockdown measures. Many also demanded the end of censorship and some even called for President Xi to step down. Many people were detained for participating in these peaceful protests. It is unclear how many were detained, and whether any remain in detention today, nearly 18 months later. Videos circulated online show police forces beating protesters during the arrests.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Chinese, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: March 3, 2025

NAME AND PRONOUN: Chen Pinlin (he/him)