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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Human Rights Advocates Applaud and Support Freedom Now's Request to the United Nations to Investigate the Chinese Government's Unlawful Detention of Chinese Human Rights Advocate, Gao Zhisheng

Advocates International, ChinaAid and Jubilee Campaign Urge the Peoples Republic of China to free world-renowned human rights advocate, Gao Zhisheng, or tell the world where he is and why he is being coercively detained in violation of Chinese law.

Washington, DC—Earlier today, on the one-year anniversary of Gao's disappearance, [Freedom Now](#) partnered with international human rights specialists Jerome A. Cohen, Irwin Cotler MP, David Matas, and David Kilgour to file a petition with the UN WORKING GROUP ON INVOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCES.

The petition informs the UN Working Group of the violations of Criminal Procedure in Gao's case and requests immediate assistance from the UN in ascertaining the whereabouts and condition of Gao Zhisheng. (See *Freedom Now's* [petition](#) and [press release](#).)

Faith-based human rights organizations *Advocates International, China Aid Association, and Jubilee Campaign* praise *Freedom Now* for taking Gao's case to the UN:

"The third paragraph of Article 33 of China's recently amended Constitution tells the world that the Chinese government 'respects and preserves human rights,'" shares Samuel B. Casey, *Advocates International's* General Counsel. "But when one of China's most world-renowned and well-respected human rights lawyers, Gao Zhisheng, sought to rely on that provision advocating for human rights under applicable Chinese law he received no such 'respect' at all; instead he has not been heard from or seen since his arrest last year by Chinese law enforcement authorities."

Casey continued, "That is why ADVOCATES INTERNATIONAL supports and applauds the filing of *Freedom Now's* petition today on behalf of Gao Zhisheng's wife, Geng He, asking the Peoples Republic of China, at the very least, to follow their own Constitution and laws, in particular CPL, Article 96, requiring that Gao Zhisheng's family be notified of his whereabouts and reasons for detention, as well as

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access to the legal counsel he needs and the right to challenge his detention. The ‘respect’ referred to in Article 33 of the Chinese Constitution can surely require nothing less.”

Executive Director of JUBILEE CAMPAIGN Ann Buwalda further praised *Freedom Now*'s actions. “China's refusal to release even minimal information concerning its detention of Mr. Gao leaves the international community no alternative but to seek intervention from the United Nations. A finding on Gao's case by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in Gao's case in 2008 precluded China from continuing to hide and silence a prominent voice for the oppressed. *Freedom Now*'s long track record of successful interventions filed with the United Nations ensures that the international community will remain relentless in securing Mr. Gao's release.”

Gao Zhisheng was seized by a dozen police officers and last seen in public on February 4, 2009. He has been repeatedly kidnapped, arrested, imprisoned and tortured by Chinese authorities for defending the persecuted. He has been an unyielding and iconic advocate for justice in the Chinese courts and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008 for his excellent human rights work.

Rumors of Gao Zhisheng's death have circulated since December 2009, later disputed by reports of Gao going “missing” from Chinese police custody. On January 21st, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Ma Zhaoxu vaguely acknowledged Gao was “where he should be,” but yesterday commented that he did not know where Gao Zhisheng was saying, “China has 1.3 billion people and I can't know all of their whereabouts.”

Yet where the Chinese government has back-tracked, others have stepped forward. This week, a bipartisan group of seven U.S. Congressmen stood in solidarity with human rights defenders, nominating Gao Zhisheng, along with Attorney Chen Guangchen and political activist Liu Xiaobo for the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize. (*See Rep. Smith's press release*, 2010-02-02)

President of CHINAAID Bob Fu remains somber on the one-year anniversary of Gao Zhisheng's disappearance. “When ChinaAid first launched our campaign to Free Gao in February 2009, we knew the Chinese government would try to conceal and deny their persecution of Gao Zhisheng. However, keeping such a prominent and well-respected international human rights hero hidden for over one year, and even alleging he had gone “missing,” is entirely indefensible and unacceptable. The Chinese “People’s” government is not only persecuting an innocent man and his family, but they are willfully ignoring the cries of millions of Chinese citizens for the protection of religious freedom and civil rights. We will not rest until we see he has been guaranteed his human rights according to the law.”

Advocates, Jubilee, and ChinaAid commend *Freedom Now* and the seven U.S. Congressmen for honoring Gao Zhisheng and other human rights defenders in China. We call on the Chinese government to cease their persecution of Gao Zhisheng and provide to him the basic human rights and civil liberties he is entitled to receive under Chinese law.

ADVOCATES INTERNATIONAL is an international organization of staff and volunteer attorneys in over 150 nations, including China, who seek to do justice with compassion, including through its RULE OF LAW TASK FORCE, working against all forms of governmental corruption and abuse of power, including without limitation such rights recognized in the UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS like the rights not to be “subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Article 5); the right to “an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law (Article 8); the right not to “be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile (Article 9); and the right “in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.” (Article 10).

China Aid Association is an international non-profit Christian organization seeking to uncover and reveal the truth about religious persecution of major and minority faith groups in China, focusing especially on the

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unofficial church. It is recognized by the U. S. government and non-government organizations worldwide as a leading voice for the persecuted Church in China. ChinaAid exists to advance religious freedom in China by exposing the abuses, encouraging the abused and equipping leaders on behalf of the persecuted church.

JUBILEE INTERNATIONAL USA promotes the human rights and religious liberty of ethnic and religious minorities in countries which imprison, terrorize or otherwise oppress them. We advocate the release of prisoners of conscience and the change of laws as necessary to effect these purposes. Jubilee also advocates against the exploitation of children, paying particular attention to the sex industry in Asia.

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