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Behind the scenes of China's forced televised confessions

April 10, 2018 – After the release of *The People's Republic of the Disappeared* to widespread acclaim – which, using victim testimonials, exposed China's use of secret imprisonment, **Safeguard Defenders** now releases a ground breaking publication on China's use of forced televised confessions.

Using extensive interviews with, and written testimonials by the actual victims of China's use of forced televised confessions, the publication offers a complete backstage pass. The report shows the torture and threats that are used to get people to 'confess' on TV – always before trial, almost always even before arrest. It shows in detail how these televised recordings are made – from the policeman playing director, the people writing the questions for journalists to ask, and the answers that the suspect is forced to give. It shows the editing and post-production that precedes the broadcast of these confessions.

The report exposes clear difference not only in the actual confession broadcasts, but also in their production, between "political" cases, by lawyers, journalist and NGO staff, and non-political criminal suspects paraded on TV, such as murderers and drug dealers. It also shows, especially for those confessions made by foreigners or with a clear foreign target audience, how the international arm of Chinese media, CCTV specifically, are not only passive platforms, but active collaborators with police and state security to produce, edit and broadcast these forced confessions – and that these televised confessions are often direct foreign policy actions to counter criticism of China.

With this report, it is made clear Chinese media are active collaborators with the Chinese police and Communist Party and state in producing propaganda for domestic audiences, and as instruments of foreign policy. The publication calls for Chinese media to register as foreign agents, and the application of sanctions against responsible individuals within Chinese state media.

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