

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

China, 2018-05-09. The first death, under mysterious circumstances, in China's new system for arbitrary detention, **Liuzhi** (留置), introduced this March, has been reported by Chinese financial news media, [Caixin.com \(cached version, original already removed\)](#). On April 9, Chen Yong (陈勇), a 45-year-old former driver for a local government leader in Jianyang district in Fujian province, was placed into the new detention system, which operates entirely outside the judicial system with no police, prosecutor nor court involvement. His family said that after 26 days they received notice that he had died, and when they went to view the body it was covered in bruises.

A US-based Chinese language website – [aboluowang](#) – said he had died on the 5 April and that the story had been widely reported on Chinese media but later scrubbed. The website also says his wife had requested recordings of the interrogations but was refused. Mr. Chen was said to be in good health and ex-military. Until 2016, he was the driver for Lin Qiang (林强), the deputy district chief of Jianyang, who is also being investigated by the Supervision Commission.

The new National Supervision Law establishes a nationwide system for handling corruption and disciplinary investigations. It replaces the much feared and extremely secretive *shuanggui* system for CCP party members, but has expanded its reach to include all party *and* government workers. Theoretically, even teachers, nurses and doctors could be detained under Liuzhi. The legal framework for the system is very similar to **Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location** (RSDL), a system for secret, prolonged, incommunicado detention that has so far mostly been used on lawyers, journalists and rights defenders.

Both systems must use detention facilities outside the judicial system (so no prisons or detention centres) and detainees are placed in solitary confinement. The National Supervision Commission has sole jurisdiction over these cases. Just as in RSDL, lawyer and family access are denied, and the location of the detainee can be concealed. For RSDL, such denial of access and information can only be practiced when an exception (usually for national security reasons) is invoked, but these exceptions have become the norm, and not using them is almost unheard of. Thus, RSDL and potentially Liuzhi will lead to Enforced Disappearances, and if undertaken systematically or widespread, can be considered a crime against humanity.

Data collected by RSDLmonitor.com on victims of RSDL has shown that physical and mental torture is routinely practiced on detainees, despite China having ratified the *Convention Against Torture*. The use of the RSDL system, and the systematic maltreatment of detainees continues to be gravely underreported. In late 2017, **Safeguard Defenders** released a book, [The People's Republic of the Disappeared](#) to widespread international acclaim, which for the first time exposed

RSDL, with first person testimonials – from innocent bystanders, lawyers and others - of the reality inside these RSDL facilities.

The new Liuzhi system will likely significantly expand China’s use of secret imprisonment – and also use of torture -- because of the expansion of potential detainees, from CCP party members only to include government workers and functionaries. Data on all these extra-judicial systems are not made public, however, since Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, the anti-corruption investigations of party members have taken a much higher profile. Media reported that in 2017 alone, [1.25 million cases were investigated, and 527,000 people punished](#). Between 2013 and 2016, [1.2 million officials were punished](#). How many of them went through the earlier *shuanggui* detention system, and how many thousands, tens of thousands, or more, will become detainees in the new Liuzhi system, remains unknown.

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Data on use of RSDL, *shuanggui* and the new Liuzhi system is most often kept secret, and reporting on victims of the system has been very limited. The book [The People’s Republic of the Disappeared](#) however contains extensive first person reporting on RSDL experiences, a system as noted above that resembles the new Liuzhi system. RSDLmonitor.com also regularly publishes new information related to RSDL and keeps a detailed database on RSDL victims and treatment.

For further information, contact Rachael at contact@RSDLmonitor.com or Safeguard Defenders at info@safeguarddefenders.com. **RSDLmonitor** is a web-based information centre on RSDL and related issues, founded by the Pan-Asian human rights NGO **Safeguard Defenders**.

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