

**Testimony to**  
**Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and**  
**International Organizations**

**US House Committee for Foreign Affairs**

By

**GeGe “Grace” Gao, Daughter of Gao Zhisheng**

**December 5, 2013**

Honorable Chairman Christopher Smith, members of Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, members of US House Committee for Foreign Affairs, ladies and gentlemen,

Greetings to everyone!

I am very grateful for giving me this opportunity to speak up for my dad -- human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng at this hearing. I deeply appreciate your caring on my dad's case.

I am Attorney Gao’s daughter GeGe. I was born in a happy, harmonious family, with mom and dad's loving care, and relatives and friends around. I had been happy and never felt lonely, until my life went through tremendous changes and was turned upside down at the age of 13.

On August 15, 2006, policemen kidnapped my father at my aunt’s home in Shandong Province, because of my father’s taking up and investigating the cases of the persecuted faith groups. On the very same day, a group of policemen forcibly broke into my house at Beijing. Then, six to seven policemen stationed at my house every day. In addition, they put me, my mom, and young brother in house arrest with 24/7 surveillance, including watching over our sleep and even going to the restroom. In order to monitor us tightly, they didn’t allow me and my 3-year-old kindergarten brother to go to school at the beginning. Under my mom’s suicidal protest by turning on the gas on the stove, the policemen finally agreed to our rights of education, but still put us under close surveillance.

Every day, I was put into a police car and go to school with the escort of six or seven policemen. They always abusively insulted my dad in the police car. For example, one day on the way to school, there were two pedestrians talking along the roadside. One policeman pointed to them and said “aren’t they Gao Zhisheng and Hu Jia chatting together”? Another policeman followed-up immediately and said that “yes, they are gay friends”, and then they all laughed

weirdly). That's how I started my day of school each day. Policemen went in and sat behind me in the classroom in each class, including music lessons. The close surveillance applied to my using of restrooms too. They went in the restroom with me and did not let me close the door. One of the most annoying things is that my teacher once said in front of the whole class: "None of you can bring cell phone to school, if GeGe uses your cell phone, you'll face with serious punishment." Also, I was forced to cut-off my computer class in the school. My spirit and nerves almost collapsed, after my father was taken away from us. In my everyday life, I had to endure the pressure from the police, suffered the discrimination from classmates and teachers, and was forced to experience the loneliness at young age. I lost all my sense of security.

My 3-year-old brother was forced to be escorted to the kindergarten in the police car as well. His classroom is the only room with a surveillance camera in the whole kindergarten.

Starting from September 2008, the policemen did not allow me to go to school anymore. This prompted our determination to leave China to escape this unbearable abuse. Under friends' assistance, my mother took me and my brother and fled away from China, and eventually came to the United States. Coming to this land of free, I did not have a trace of excitement. I missed my dad so much. Combined with the accumulated worries about my father, I couldn't take it anymore and experienced a complete nerve breakdown. On the first Christmas night in the United States, I was admitted into the hospital for treatment.

I have been living in the United States for nearly five years now. I couldn't hear the voice of my father; neither could I receive his letters about current situation. I missed him so much. The most recent news was on this past January that my uncle was allowed to see my father in the prison. However, my uncle was not allowed to release any information about my dad by the Beijing Authority. It is almost another year since then. With the excuses of various reasons and regulations, the Beijing authority did not allow my family members to see my dad again. Moreover, all my relatives, such as my grandma, grandpa, three aunts, and his brothers and sisters, were blacklisted. They were deprived the basic rights of even getting a citizen passport. Eight years passed, the persecution on my father is not only still continuing, but also extends to all of our family members.

I'm living in the country with the upmost freedom in the world, but I still feel very sour in my heart because of my dad's situation. The freedom has not yet come to my dad, so it still has not genuinely arrived for me and my whole family.

My young brother once mentioned to me in his tears: "I really couldn't remember dad's face and figure; I am no longer familiar with his voice."

Today, gathering my courage and strength, I come and speak up at this hearing to tell my suffering of injustice treatment in China. I want to let you know that my dad is still behind the bars, and my mom is in poor health, struggling to support the family; I need to go to school to complete the education; and my brother is still very young. How can individuals or a single

family constantly fight with a huge government for such a long time? I hope that the US congressional members and kind people in US can hear our helpless voices and take actions right now. I know that only you can help me get back my happiness and normal life, comfort my brother's young heart and feelings. I know that only you can help my dad be released with peace, and let my family be reunited.

I wish that President Obama and Vice President Biden could mention about my father's name Gao Zhisheng in public occasions and urge the immediate release of my father without conditions.

I wish that staffs from US Embassy in China could go to visit my father in the prison. It has been almost a year now that no family or lawyer visit was allowed to see my father. We could call him and he could not write to us.

It is Christmas season now. I wish that more kind people in the world could write postcards to my father. Although my father could not hear what we say here, but the Chinese communist regime will hear our voice. Your kind concern and care for my father is the greatest protection over him.

In China, when my father came back home after the forced disappearance, he would try to show a lifted spirit and entertain me and my brother with humors. After I arrived in US, I read many reports regarding the horrible tortures that he went through during several times of forced disappearance. Whenever I think about this, I always feel more proud of the greatness of my father. I believe that when we speak out for my father, we are actually present and protect our own freedom and values.

Thank you in advance for all the helps that you can render to our family!

GeGe Gao,

Daughter of Attorney Gao Zhisheng

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