

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/hongkong-journalist-chang-ping-yet-to-06-12-2011,41514.html>

Asia - Hongkong

Waiting for a visa

## Journalist Chang Ping yet to receive a work permit

6 December 2011

In an open letter in the Hong Kong government, Reporters Without Borders asks why the visa request by journalist Chang Ping remains unanswered.

6 December 2011

Donald Tsang  
Chief Executive  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
People's Republic of China  
Tamar, Hong Kong

Immigration Dept.  
Immigration Tower,  
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Dear Sir

### Visa application by Mr. Zhang Ping

Reporters Without Borders, an organization that campaigns for freedom of the press and freedom of information, wishes to draw your attention to the case of Mr. **Zhang Ping**, also known as **Chang Ping** (长平). A journalist and blogger, he is a former deputy editor of *Nanfang Zhoumo* (南方周末) and for the past five months he has been unable to take up his post in Hong Kong as editor of the online magazine *Sun Affairs* (阳光时务), owned by *Sun TV*, which he was due to have started in July this year. Up till now, Zhang Ping has faced unexplained silence on the part of the Hong Kong Immigration Department.

After he was appointed to the post in March, Mr. Zhang Ping applied to your government's Immigration Department for a work visa. As a general rule, applications of this kind are dealt with in four weeks. As of today, he has received no response, either accepting or rejecting his request. No explanation has been given for this silence. The department concerned has merely informed him that his application is under review.

This unusual and unexplained delay leads us to fear there has been direct political interference by the Beijing authorities with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in order to prevent the journalist from taking up his post with a newspaper that Chinese officialdom has had in its sights for several years. The recent blockage of the website of the *Sun TV* online magazine that he was meant to edit is not unrelated to our concerns. With no warning or explanation, the television station was refused permission by the Chinese authorities to broadcast its programmes by cable at the end of 2009.

On several occasions Mr. Zhang Ping, a respected journalist in China, has paid for his stand in favour of press freedom and his refusal to work under censorship. In 2008, he was dismissed as deputy editor of the daily *Nandu Zhoukan Zazhi* (应为南都周刊杂志) for publishing editorials on Tibet that were at odds with the official line. On 28 January this year, he was forced to resign from his post with *Nanfang Baoye Jituan* (南方报业集团) for refusing to make changes to articles he had written. Since then, he has been banned from publishing anything he has written in any medium, whether in newspapers or on the Internet. All of his articles published online

have been deleted.

In the light of these worrying events, we request that you do all in your power to ensure that Mr. Zhang Ping's work visa is granted without delay so that he can take up his appointment as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and please accept my sincere regards.

Jean-François Julliard  
Secretary General, Reporters Without Borders

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