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## JUSTICE NEWS

### Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, April 17, 2023

## Two Arrested for Operating Illegal Overseas Police Station of the Chinese Government

### Defendants Are New York City Residents Who Allegedly Operated the Police Station in Lower Manhattan and Destroyed Evidence When Confronted by the FBI

A complaint was unsealed today in federal court in Brooklyn, New York, charging two defendants in connection with opening and operating an illegal overseas police station, located in lower Manhattan, New York, for a provincial branch of the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) of the People's Republic of China (PRC). "Harry" Lu Jianwang, 61, of the Bronx, and Chen Jinping, 59, of Manhattan, were arrested earlier this morning at their homes in New York City. Their initial appearances are scheduled this afternoon in Brooklyn before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ramon E. Reyes Jr.

As alleged in the complaint, Lu and Chen are charged with conspiring to act as agents of the PRC government as well as obstructing justice by destroying evidence of their communications with an MPS official. The defendants worked together to establish the first overseas police station in the United States on behalf of the Fuzhou branch of the MPS. The police station – which closed in the fall of 2022 after those operating it became aware of the FBI's investigation – occupied a floor in an office building in Manhattan's Chinatown. While acting under the direction and control of an MPS Official, Lu and Chen helped open and operate the clandestine police station. None of the participants in the scheme informed the U.S. government that they were helping the PRC government surreptitiously open and operate an illegal MPS police station on U.S. soil.

"The PRC, through its repressive security apparatus, established a secret physical presence in New York City to monitor and intimidate dissidents and those critical of its government," said Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen of the Justice Department's National Security Division. "The PRC's actions go far beyond the bounds of acceptable nation-state conduct. We will resolutely defend the freedoms of all those living in our country from the threat of authoritarian repression."

"This prosecution reveals the Chinese government's flagrant violation of our nation's sovereignty by establishing a secret police station in the middle of New York City," said U.S. Attorney Breon Peace for the Eastern District of New York. "As alleged, the defendants and their co-conspirators were tasked with doing the PRC's bidding, including

helping locate a Chinese dissident living in the United States, and obstructed our investigation by deleting their communications. Such a police station has no place here in New York City – or any American community.”

“It is simply outrageous that China’s Ministry of Public Security thinks it can get away with establishing a secret, illegal police station on U.S. soil to aid its efforts to export repression and subvert our rule of law,” said Acting Assistant Director Kurt Ronnow of the FBI Counterintelligence Division. “This case serves as a powerful reminder that the People’s Republic of China will stop at nothing to bend people to their will and silence messages they don’t want anyone to hear. The FBI is dedicated to protecting everyone in the United States against efforts to undermine our democratic freedoms, and we’ll hold any state actors – and those who help them – accountable for breaking our laws.”

Before helping to open the police station in early 2022, Lu had a longstanding relationship of trust with PRC law enforcement, including the MPS. Since 2015, and through the operation of the secret police station, Lu was tasked with carrying out various activities, including to assist the PRC government’s repressive activities on U.S. soil:

- In 2015, during PRC President Xi Jinping’s visit to the United States, Lu participated in counterprotests in Washington, D.C., against members of a religion that is forbidden under PRC law. A deputy director of the MPS awarded Lu a plaque for the work he performed on behalf of the PRC government.
- In 2018, Lu was enlisted in efforts to cause a purported PRC fugitive to return to the PRC. The victim reported being repeatedly harassed to return to the PRC, including through threats of violence made to the victim and the victim’s family in the United States and in the PRC.
- In 2022, the MPS Official sought Lu’s assistance in locating an individual living in California who is a pro-democracy activist. In turn, Lu enlisted the help of another coconspirator. Later, when confronted by the FBI about these conversations, Lu denied that they occurred.

In October 2022, the FBI conducted a judicially authorized search of the illegal police station. In connection with the search, FBI agents interviewed both Lu and Chen and seized their phones. In reviewing the contents of these phones, FBI agents observed that communications between Lu and Chen, on the one hand, and the MPS Official, on the other, appeared to have been deleted. In subsequent consensual interviews, Lu and Chen admitted to the FBI that they had deleted their communications with the MPS Official after learning about the ongoing FBI investigation, thus preventing the FBI from learning the full extent of the MPS’s directions for the overseas police station.

If convicted of conspiring to act as agents of the PRC, the defendants face a maximum sentence of five years in prison. The obstruction of justice charge carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

The FBI New York Field Office investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Alexander A. Solomon and Antoinette N. Rangel for the Eastern District of New York, and Trial Attorney Scott A. Claffee of the National Security Division’s Counterintelligence and Export Control Section are prosecuting the case.

The FBI has created a website for victims to report efforts by foreign governments to stalk, intimidate, or assault people in the United States. If you believe that you are or have been a victim of transnational repression, please visit: [www.fbi.gov/investigate/counterintelligence/transnational-repression](https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/counterintelligence/transnational-repression).

*The charges in the complaint are merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.*

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