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China Arrests Activists Held in Labor Crackdown, Reuters Reports

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China has formally arrested a Guangzhou labor organizer and three other people authorities had been holding amid a crackdown on worker activism, Reuters reported, citing two lawyers.

Zeng Feiyang, director of the Panyu Migrant Workers Center, was charged with "disturbing social order," Reuters said, citing his lawyer, Cheng Zhunqiang. Fellow labor activists Meng Han and Zhu Xiaomei were also arrested on the same charge, Cheng and Yan Xin, who is Meng's lawyer, told Reuters. The lawyers said prosecutors in Guangzhou informed them of the arrests Friday, without explaining why the trio was charged.

Another activist, He Xiaobo, was arrested on charges of embezzlement, according to the New York-based China Labor Watch. The lawyers for Zhu and He couldn't be reached for comment, Reuters said. Prosecutors in Guangzhou's Panyu district didn't answer Reuters' calls seeking comment, and the Guangdong government didn't respond to a faxed query, the report said.

The four were among several southern China labor activists detained late last year, as a broad crackdown on dissent under President Xi Jinping expands. The campaign has led to the jailing of journalists, dissidents and lawyers who defend them, with dozens of members of the so-called rights-defense movement detained last summer over allegations of manipulating public opinion and influencing rulings.

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