

# Hong Kong Bookseller Gui Minhai jailed for 10 years in China

Tuesday 25 February 2020, by [CHEUNG Lawrence](#), [HO Kelly](#), [MAI Jun](#), [SIU Phila](#) (Date first published: 25 February 2020).

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## **Bookseller Gui Minhai jailed for 10 years in China for ‘illegally providing intelligence’ to overseas parties**

by HO Kelly (HKFP)

<https://www.hongkongfp.com/2020/02/25/bookseller-gui-minhai-jailed-10-years-china-illegally-providing-intelligence-overseas-parties/>

Detained bookseller Gui Minhai was sentenced to 10 years in jail in China on Monday after being found guilty of “illegally providing intelligence” to overseas parties.

According to the Ningbo Intermediate People’s Court in Zhejiang Province, Gui said he agreed with the sentence and will not appeal.

Gui – a Swedish national – was among five Hong Kong-based booksellers affiliated with Causeway Bay Books, which sold political gossip titles.

He disappeared in late 2015, only to reappear in mainland China “confessing” on state TV to various crimes. He served two years in prison.

Gui was then released in October 2017, only to be arrested again in January 2018 while travelling with Swedish diplomats on a train to Beijing to seek medical help.

The court said Gui had applied to reinstate his Chinese citizenship in 2018, though it is not clear if he gave up his Swedish citizenship.

### **‘Flimsy, excessive’**

In a response to HKFP, President of PEN Hong Kong Tammy Ho Lai-Ming condemned the charge as “flimsy” and the court’s sentencing as “excessive.”

*“Gui’s human rights as a publisher and as a Swedish citizen have been repeatedly violated by the Chinese state... and he has been forced to participate in a charade of confessions in that time. PEN Hong Kong also feels the administrations of CY Leung and Carrie Lam have been shamefully*

*complicit in the political prosecution of Gui and the other booksellers by refusing to speak up about their abductions, which were in clear breach of Hong Kong law,” she said.*

Amnesty International’s China Researcher Patrick Poon also condemned the sentence: *“The deplorable verdict and shockingly harsh sentence handed to Gui Minhai on completely unsubstantiated charges demonstrates yet again that the Chinese authorities are not letting the coronavirus crisis distract them from repressing dissidents... Unless China can provide concrete, credible and admissible evidence of the crimes Gui has allegedly committed, he must be released immediately and unconditionally.”*

HKFP has contacted Gui’s daughter and the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for comment.

## **Gui Minhai is Swedish, says Stockholm, following claim jailed bookseller sought to reinstate Chinese citizenship**

by HO Kelly (HKFP)

<https://www.hongkongfp.com/2020/02/25/gui-minhai-swedish-says-stockholm-claim-jailed-bookseller-sought-reinstate-chinese-citizenship/>

Stockholm has confirmed to HKFP that jailed bookseller Gui Minhai is a Swedish citizen, after claims that he had sought to reinstate his Chinese citizenship.

Gui was found guilty of “illegally providing intelligence” to overseas parties by the Ningbo Intermediate People’s Court in Zhejiang Province on Monday and was sentenced to 10 years in jail.

Gui was among five Hong Kong-based booksellers affiliated with Causeway Bay Books, which sold political gossip titles. He disappeared in Thailand in late 2015, only to reappear in mainland China “confessing” on state TV to various crimes. He served two years in prison.

The court on Monday said Gui – who was born in China – had applied to restore his Chinese citizenship in 2018. As China does not recognise dual citizenship, it meant that Gui would have to renounce his Swedish nationality.

However, Sweden’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs told HKFP on Tuesday that Gui is still a citizen. They said they noted the claims over his nationality, but *“Swedish citizenship can only be renounced after an examination and a decision by the Swedish Migration Agency.”*

The ministry added they are seeking official information about the case and are demanding that Gui be released.

*“Our Embassy is now putting its full focus on the matter, in part seeking more information and in part to obtain consular access... We will continue to focus our efforts on obtaining his release,”* a press officer said, adding that they are trying to send a Swedish doctor to Gui.

Meanwhile, **Peter Dahlin – a fellow Swedish national** who also appeared in a televised “confession” in China – told HKFP that the sentencing showed that Beijing did not care about “appearances” any more.

*“The charge is ludicrous, the only ‘state secrets’ that Gui may have is knowledge about how Chinese agents kidnapped him in Thailand, and about the torture he has endured after being returned to China. It has long been feared that China could not let Gui leave, as it could not let information about his treatment, and kidnapping, come out, and this is just one in a long list of steps they have*

taken. As for his supposed renouncing of his Swedish citizenship, it has no legal bearing of course, as Gui has only Swedish citizenship, and not Chinese,” he said.

**Tammy Ho (PEN Hong Kong)** condemned charges against Gui Minhai as “flimsy” & the court’s sentencing as “excessive.” <http://bit.ly/2Ta6EoY>

Gui was jailed for 10 years on Mon for “illegally providing intelligence” to overseas parties. Full story: <http://bit.ly/2Ta6EoY>

## **China jails Hong Kong bookseller Gui Minhai for 10 years**

by Jun Mai , Phila Siu and Lawrence Chung (SCMP)

<https://scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3052197/china-jails-hong-kong-bookseller-gui-minhai-10-years>

*Five years after he ‘disappeared’ while in Thailand, the Hong Kong-based Swedish citizen has been found guilty of ‘illegally providing intelligence for overseas entities’. Chinese court said Gui Minhai would not be appealing his sentence.*

A Chinese court has convicted Hong Kong bookseller Gui Minhai for “illegally providing intelligence for overseas entities”, almost five years after he was first detained.

Gui was sentenced to 10 years and deprivation of political rights for five years by a Chinese court on Monday 24. A statement by the Intermediate People’s Court of Ningbo said Gui would not appeal at the end of the trial.

- **Gui, a Swedish national, ran Causeway Bay Books in Hong Kong** – an outlet known for selling gossip titles about Chinese Communist Party officials. **He was one of five booksellers [1] who disappeared in 2015.** The Monday 24 court statement also said Gui “agreed to restore his Chinese citizenship” in 2018, a move which Beijing could use to deny him consular assistance from European diplomats.

- **Sweden’s foreign minister** on Tuesday 25 demanded that Chinese authorities release Gui. “We have always been clear that we demand that Gui Minhai be released so that he is able to reunite with his daughter, his family, and that demand remains,” Foreign Minister Ann Linde said in an interview on Swedish Radio.

*“We, of course, demand immediate access to our Swedish citizen in order to give him all consular support that he is entitled to,” she said.*

The Swedish foreign ministry said in a separate statement that its diplomats “did not have access to the trial. We were unable to review the indictment or offer access to legal counsel.”

- **Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian** said in Beijing on Tuesday 25 that Gui’s rights and interests had been fully guaranteed. He said consular visits in general were put on hold due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The case against Gui was one of the most controversial brought by Chinese authorities in recent years. Gui went missing from Thailand and, along with four other booksellers, eventually reappeared in mainland China. In custody, he then told state television that he “turned himself in” in relation to a traffic accident in Ningbo, where he used to live, from 2003.

After serving terms for the traffic accident case, he was released in 2017, but kept under close surveillance in China. He was arrested again by Chinese authorities on a train going to Beijing, while he was in the company of Swedish diplomats [3].

Beijing's draconian treatment of Gui drew a backlash from Sweden, as well as from the European Union.

- In December 2019, **Sweden's former ambassador to China Anna Lindstedt** was indicted by Swedish prosecutors for exceeding her authority during negotiations with a foreign power. She was accused of setting up an unauthorised meeting between Angela Gui, the bookseller's daughter, and Chinese businessmen in Stockholm in January 2019 in an attempt to negotiate his release.

- **Bei Ling, a long-time friend of Gui**, said he did not believe his friend had received a fair trial in mainland China. He also said he suspected the "intelligence" Gui was accused of providing overseas was the detail of how he was kidnapped by Chinese agents in Thailand and brought to the mainland. *"What intelligence can he possibly have? He has been under surveillance by the Chinese government all the time and had his movements restricted,"* Bei said. *"The only intelligence is how he was abducted by Chinese agents from Thailand."*

Bei urged the Swedish government to give a full account of how Gui was snatched from a Beijing-bound train in 2018, while accompanied by two Swedish diplomats.

Bei said he did not believe Gui would have his Chinese nationality restored after the ordeal he had been through on the mainland. *"I believe he was asked to do so,"* Bei said.

It remains unclear if Gui has given up his Swedish citizenship, although in 2018 he said he might consider doing so.

Under Chinese rules, anyone who wants to restore Chinese nationality must, among other requirements, submit a copy of their foreign passport and proof of prior Chinese nationality.

- **The Swedish Foreign Ministry** said on Tuesday 25 that Gui remained a Swedish citizen, and that the citizenship could be renounced only after an examination and a decision by the Swedish Migration Agency.

- **Gui's publishing associate, Lam Wing-kee**, earlier accused Chinese agents of kidnapping him while he was crossing the border to Shenzhen in 2015. He was detained and put through eight months of "mental torture".

Lam was later allowed to return to Hong Kong, he said, because Chinese interrogators wanted him to bring back a hard disk containing more information about the bookstore's mainland customers. He did not return to the mainland and has since moved to Taiwan to open up a bookshop.

Lam said he was *"a little surprised"* that the mainland authorities had persisted with the case. *"They arrested five people, all because of a certain book. This shows there could be further spillovers from this case,"* he said.

*"I believe they want to use the trial [of Gui] to warn others against doing anything which may be found unacceptable by the Chinese authorities. Also, they want to send out the message that they won't let go of their control of Hong Kong, even during a critical time when they need to spend a great deal of time and effort in tackling the coronavirus outbreak."*

Lam said Gui may serve just four years in jail, since he had been effectively behind bars since 2015. *"This could be the reason why he did not want to appeal against the court's decision,"* he said.

## Links

[1] <https://www.scmp.com/topics/hong-kong-bookseller-disappearances>

[2] <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3043025/detained-hong-kong-bookseller-gui-minhai-alive-and-well>

[3] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-crime/article/2130085/hong-kong-bookseller-gui-minhai-snatched-mainland-chinese>

- [4]  
<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3038036/sweden-honours-detained-bookseller-gui-minhai-despite-chinese>
- [5]  
<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3013914/gui-minhai-and-extradition-cases-await-new-swedish-ambassador>
- [6]  
<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3007905/bookseller-lam-wing-kee-leaves-hong-kong-taiwan-fearing>
- [7]  
[https://www.scmp.com/china-ai-report/redeem?coupon=PFZ7jKZm&utm\\_source=scmp&utm\\_medium=content&utm\\_campaign=CSB-I-inhouse-research\\_ai\\_report-scmp-20-wp-1a](https://www.scmp.com/china-ai-report/redeem?coupon=PFZ7jKZm&utm_source=scmp&utm_medium=content&utm_campaign=CSB-I-inhouse-research_ai_report-scmp-20-wp-1a)