

## Interpol 'complicit' in arrest of its chief in China

International police body rejects allegations by Meng Hongwei's wife

Grace Meng has launched legal proceedings on behalf of Meng Hongwei, who has been detained in China since October, and his family against Interpol in The Hague © John Leicester/AP

Victor Mallet in Paris 33 MINUTES AGO

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Grace Meng, wife of the former Interpol chief Meng Hongwei detained in China, has launched legal proceedings against the international police body and called it complicit in Beijing's treatment of her husband.

"Interpol has adopted an unprecedented approach for an international organisation," she said in a statement. "[I]t failed to protect and assist my family and it is complicit in the internationally wrongful acts of its member country, China."

Mr Meng, who in 2016 became the first Chinese national to lead Interpol, disappeared while travelling through China in October last year when he was still the organisation's president. It later emerged that he had been detained. Last month he was reported to have [confessed in a Chinese court](#) to taking more than \$2m in bribes and kickbacks. No verdict or sentence has been made public.

His wife, who lived with him and their two children in the French city of Lyon where Interpol is based, says her husband has been falsely accused and is being targeted for his reformist political views by China's hardline President Xi Jinping.

Ms Meng herself has been granted political asylum in France and is under French police protection.

She said she had launched legal proceedings on behalf of Mr Meng and his family against Interpol at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

Chinese prosecutors have accused Meng Hongwei of using his senior public positions in China from 2005 to 2017 to earn Rmb14.46m in cash and other bribes © Jeff Pachoud/Reuters

"A tribunal will be constituted and it will decide whether my husband's disappearance is 'only a matter for the relevant authorities in both France and China', as alleged by Interpol, or whether Interpol itself breached its obligations owed to my family," she said.

Stephen Bailey of Lindeborg in London, one of her lawyers, said Ms Meng was seeking "declaratory relief" — essentially a statement from the court about Interpol's actions — as well as compensation.

[Interpol](#) has denied any involvement in Beijing's actions against Mr Meng and said in a statement on Sunday that Ms Meng's allegations were "baseless".

Interpol also said the legal proceedings, begun in April, were supposed to be confidential, although this was disputed by Ms Meng's lawyers, who said only certain aspects of the case were subject to confidentiality.

Mr Meng's appointment to head Interpol three years ago was controversial, with China's critics voicing fears at the time that Interpol could be used to target Chinese dissidents as well as criminals.

Now it is Mr Meng who is portrayed by his wife as a victim of a political crackdown. He is one of hundreds of thousands of officials to have been targeted in Mr Xi's war on corruption.

Chinese prosecutors said that from 2005 to 2017, Mr Meng had used his positions as a vice-minister of public security and head of China's coast guard to earn Rmb14.46m (\$2.11m) in cash and other bribes given to secure his help with promotions and business ventures, according to a statement from the Tianjin courthouse.

The National Supervisory Commission, China's powerful anti-corruption body, found that he had "resisted implementing central party decisions" and had "wantonly squandered state funds to satisfy his family's lavish lifestyle".

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