

**Public**

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To: Health Professional Network  
From: Health and Human Rights Team  
Date: 7 June 2007

### **Torture**

#### **Yang Maodong (also known as Guo Feixiong) (m) China**

(See earlier information in ASA 17/008/2006, 9 February 2006; ASA 17/009/2006, 15 February 2006; ASA 17/013/2007, 31 May 2007)

#### **Summary:**

Yang Maodong (also known as Guo Feixiong), held in Guangzhou No.1 detention centre, Guangdong Province, southern China, has reportedly been tortured in police custody in an apparent attempt to make him confess to charges of 'illegal business dealings'. The abuse has reportedly driven him to attempt suicide. He is scheduled to appear in court on 15 June, and there are grave concerns that he will not receive a fair trial.

#### **Background information:**

Yang Maodong, a legal adviser with the Beijing-based Shengzhi Law Office, was detained on 8 February 2006 by police in Beijing. He was participating in a public hunger strike in response to a call by prominent human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng for a "hunger strike group" to protest the government's crackdown on human rights activists. The public hunger strike was also to protest against Yang Maodong's previous detention and beating for his activities in support of Taishi villagers. Yang Maodong provided legal assistance to villagers in Taishi, Guangdong province, as they sought to remove the allegedly corrupt village leader from office, in 2005.

Although the current charges against him relate to his business activities, he says that police questioning has focused largely on the events in Taishi in 2005, which the policy claim 'endangered public security'.

According to local, unofficial sources, Yang Maodong claims to have been deprived of sleep for seven nights, and beaten and tied down for 40 days, between 14 September 2006 and 26 December 2006, whilst in custody in Guangzhou No. 1 detention centre. On the night of 19 January 2007 he was transferred to Shenyang city, Liaoning province, northern China to "facilitate investigation". He says that he was tortured by police who strapped him down onto a so-called "tiger bench" for four hours; hit him with an electric prod on his arms, legs and genitals while hung from the ceiling by his arms and legs, and slapped him until his face was swollen. He claims he attempted suicide the following day. On 19 March police officers reportedly beat him continuously for around five minutes with electric prods, which were not switched on. On 27 March he was returned to Guangzhou, where his treatment has apparently improved.

Despite several measures introduced to curb the practice, torture and ill-treatment remain widespread in China. Common methods include kicking, beating, electric shocks, suspension by the arms, shackling in painful positions and sleep and food-deprivation. When on a "tiger bench" the victim reportedly sits on a bench with legs tied stretched out straight on the bench and hands tied behind a vertical back support. Bricks or other hard objects are then pushed under the victim's legs or feet, causing the legs to bend upwards painfully, sometimes until they break.

Reports of detainees being tortured while in custody awaiting trial, so as to extract confessions, often go unchallenged by the courts, and impartial investigations into such allegations are rare. In November 2006, China's Deputy Procurator General, Wang Zhenchuan, admitted that at least 30 wrongful convictions handed down each year resulted from the use of torture, with the true number likely to be much higher.

### **Recommended action:**

Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Chinese or your own language.

- Introduce yourself as a health professional gravely concerned by reports of the torture of Yang Maodong in police custody.
- Urge the authorities to guarantee that Yang Maodong is not subjected to further torture and ill-treatment, consistent with the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- Urge the authorities to guarantee Yang Maodong's access to any medical help he may require in line with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.
- Urge the authorities to guarantee that Yang Maodong receives a fair trial, in line with international standards.
- Urge the authorities to conduct an independent and impartial investigation into allegations that Yang Maodong has been tortured, with a view to bringing those responsible to justice.

### **Appeals to:**

**Prime Minister**

WEN Jiabao Guojia Zongli  
The State Council, 9 Xihuangcheng Genbeijie  
Beijingshi 100032, People's Republic of China  
Email: gazette@mail.gov.cn

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate of the People's Republic of China**

JIA Chunwang Jianchazhang  
Zuigao Renmin Jianchayuan  
147 Beiheyandajie  
Beijingshi 100726, People's Republic of China

**Salutation: Dear Procurator-General**

**Governor of the Guangdong Provincial People's Government**

HUANG Huahua Shengzhang  
Guangdongsheng Renmin Zhengfu  
9 Lou, 305 Dongfeng Zhonglu  
Guangzhoushi 510031  
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**Salutation: Dear Governor**

**Chief Procurator of the Guangdong Provincial People's Procuratorate**

ZHANG Xuejun Jianchazhang  
Guangdongsheng Renmin Jianchayuan  
26 Cangbianlu  
Guangzhoushi 510090  
Guangdongsheng, People's Republic of China

**Salutation: Dear Sir**

**Copies to:**

**Secretary of the Guangdong Provincial Party Committee**

ZHANG Dejiang Shuji  
Zhonggong Guangdongsheng Weiyuanhui  
Guangzhoushi, Guangdongsheng, People's Republic of China

**Salutation: Dear Secretary**

and to diplomatic representatives of China accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.