

24 May 2002

Further information on UA 104/02 (ASA 17/019/2002, 5 April 2002) - Fear of Torture/Arbitrary Arrest. New Concerns: Possible "disappearance"

PEOPLE'S YAO Fuxin (m), aged 54]
REPUBLIC Xiao Yunliang (m), aged 57]
OF CHINA Pang Qingxiang (m), aged 58] workers' representatives
Wang Zhaoming (m), aged 39]

New names: Gu Baoshu (m), aged 37] workers' representatives
Wang Dawei (m), aged 50]

The first four workers' representatives named above are still in detention and there is serious concern for the health of Yao Fuxin who may have suffered a stroke. Following demonstrations calling for the release of these men, demonstrator Gu Baoshu has been severely beaten, harassed and threatened by the police. The whereabouts of another activist Wang Dawei, remain unknown as he has reportedly not been seen since mid April.

Yao Fuxin is believed to be seriously ill possibly due to ill treatment. On 11 April his wife was allowed to visit him, for the first time since his arrest, at the Tieling City Detention centre, in northeastern China. She reports that the right side of his body appeared to be numb, he was walking with a limp and his right hand was shaking. He may have suffered several minor strokes since his detention, but reportedly had no prior history of cardiovascular disease. His family have appealed for him to be released for medical treatment, but have not received a response from the authorities.

Following the detention of the four activists, demonstrations calling for their release and an investigation into the alleged embezzlement of funds from the Liaoyang city Ferroalloy factory, where Yao Fuxin was employed, have taken place. On 15 May, demonstrators including a retired woman and her son were allegedly beaten by plain clothes police.

On 16 April, Gu Baoshu, an activist involved in demonstrations, was forcibly taken from his home and severely beaten by the police. He was released after several hours of interrogation. He was reportedly covered in bruises, suffering from severe chest pains and had blood clots in his eyes. He was subsequently threatened and harassed by the police, following his demands for those responsible for his beatings to be investigated and his medical costs to be paid for by the Public Security Bureau.

Workers' leader Wang Dawei was reportedly travelling to Beijing from Liaoning Province to file a petition to the central authorities, against the current situation at the Ferroalloy factory. He has reportedly not been heard of since mid April, after calling Gu Baoshu's family to update them on his progress. It is feared that he might be in detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years, labour unrest has been increasing throughout China due to the closure of many State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and resulting unemployment for thousands of workers. In March 2002, the workers' representatives named above were involved in organizing large-scale demonstrations in Liaoyang city, Liaoning province, which involved up to 30,000 workers from around 20 factories

in the city. The workers were protesting against layoffs, alleged management corruption and delayed welfare payments. The factory and the local government have reportedly met some of the demands relating to back pay and medical expenses, but did not respond to demands for the release of the activists.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Yao Fuxin, Xiao Yunliang, Pang Qingxiang and Wang Zhaoming remain in detention after having been arbitrarily arrested for peacefully attempting to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and association;
- urging the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally, and to ensure that they have immediate access to lawyers, their families and medical attention;
- urging the authorities to clarify the whereabouts of Wang Dawei, who appears to have been detained, and provide immediate guarantees for his safety;
- expressing concern at Yao Fuxin's medical problems, which appear to have developed in detention, and urge the authorities to investigate any allegations of ill-treatment;
- expressing concern at reports that Gu Baoshu has been tortured in detention, calling for an impartial investigation into these allegations and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of the Liaoning Provincial People's Government

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Shenyangshi 110032

Liaoning Province, People's Republic of China

Telegram: Governor, Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China

Telexes: 80039 LFAO CN or 80040 SYFAO CN (Please forward to the Governor)

Fax: + 86 24 86892112

email: wjj@ln.cei.gov.cn

Salutation: Dear Governor

Director of the Liaoning Provincial Department of Public Security

WANG Enfu Tingzhang

Gong'anting

2 Qishan Zhonglu, Beiling Dajie

Huangguqu

Shenyangshi 110032

Liaoning Province, People's Republic of China

Telegram: Director of the Provincial Department of Public Security, Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China

Salutation: Dear Director

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and to diplomatic representatives of the People's Republic of China accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 July 2002.