

URGENT ACTION

DISSIDENT'S RELATIVES DISAPPEAR

Li Wangling, sister of recently deceased prisoner of conscience Li Wangyang, and her husband Zhao Baozhu were detained on 7 June. They have not been heard from since 9 June and their whereabouts are unknown.

Li Wangling and her husband, **Zhao Baozhu**, were detained on 7 June in the city of Shaoyang, in the southern province of Hunan. Her brother, veteran dissident Li Wangyang, had died in hospital the previous day: she and Zhao Baozhu had asked the authorities how he had died, and demanded an independent investigation and autopsy. The authorities in Shaoyang claimed Li Wangyang had committed suicide, but his friends and relatives do not believe this.

Friends were able to speak to Zhao Baozhu by telephone on 9 June, but their conversation was abruptly cut off after Zhao raised the subject of Li Wangyang. According to various sources, Li Wangling and Zhao Baozhu were initially detained at a hotel in the Daxiang district of the city and are believed to have been taken away by the authorities at about 11.20am that day. Since that time they have been unreachable.

Please write immediately in Chinese, English or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to immediately inform Li Wangling and Zhao Baozhu's relatives of their whereabouts and the reasons for their detention;
- calling on the authorities to ensure the couple are safe and have access to their family and legal representation of their choice, as well as any medical attention they may require;
- calling on them to order an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the enforced disappearance of Li Wangling and Zhao Baozhu and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice;
- insisting that they conduct a prompt, thorough and independent investigation into Li Wangyang's death and publish the findings.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 AUGUST 2012 TO:

Director, Hunan Public Security Bureau
Sun Jianguo Juzhang
Hunan Gong'anju
9 Dongdajie, Qianmen 110 Bayilu,
Changsha
Furongqu Changshashi, 410001
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 731 8459 0140
Salutation: Dear Director

Premier
WEN JiabaoGuojiaZongli
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie, Xichengqu,
Beijingshi 100017,
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 6596 1109
Salutation: Your Excellency

Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress
Wu Bangguo Weiyuanzhang
Quanguo Renda Changwu Weiyuanhui
Bangongting
23 Xijiaominxiang
Xichengqu, Beijingshi 100805
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Chairman

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Early in the morning of 6 June, Li Wangyang's sister's husband, Zhao Baozhu, received a telephone call from the hospital saying that Li Wangyang had committed suicide in his ward. He and his wife, Li Wangling, went to the hospital immediately and found Li Wangyang's dead body in his hospital room. The Shaoyang city authorities have maintained that Li Wangyang committed suicide by hanging himself, his family and friends have questioned this. Photographs taken on 6 June at the hospital showed him positioned upright, staring out the window and with his neck tied to the window frame by a strip of cloth. However, these photographs also showed his feet firmly on the ground and his face showing no signs of suffocation. The family thinks it is inconceivable that an almost blind man unable to walk without assistance could have managed to hang himself.

The police took Li Wangyang's the body away later on 6 June, though Li Wangyang's family and relatives protested that it was unclear whether the authorities would allow an independent post-mortem investigation. An autopsy was carried out on 8 June, without Li Wangyang's family or their lawyer being present. The authorities cremated the body the next day. Following domestic and international outcry, on 15 June Hunan Province police announced a task force had been set up to investigate Li Wangyang's death. On 22 June, it was reported that the autopsy report was completed, but the authorities refused to publish it.

Li Wangyang, who was released from prison in May 2011, was a prominent figure in the labour rights movement who had been persecuted by the Chinese authorities for the past two decades. In 1989, he was involved in setting up an independent workers' organization, the Shaoyang Workers' Autonomous Federation, to demand better working conditions for labourers such as mine workers. The same year, he was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment for his involvement in the 1989 pro-democracy movement. According to local sources, he was severely beaten by prison guards and held in solitary confinement.

He was moved to a hospital in June 1996 to receive treatment but eight months later he was taken back to prison.

Li was released early in June 2000 because of his poor health. He began petitioning the authorities for compensation to cover the cost of medical treatment but in May 2001 he was rearrested after he went on hunger strike. He was given a 10-year sentence for "inciting subversion" and was finally freed in May 2011.

On 22 May 2012, Li gave an interview to a Hong Kong journalist where he spoke about the torture which had left him both blind and almost deaf and unable to move unaided. After this interview, the local authorities intensified their control, stationing more police at the hospital where Li Wangyang was staying.

Name: Li Wangling (f), Zhao Baozhu (m)

Gender m/f: both