

PUBLIC

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UA 163/09 Incommunicado detention/Prisoners of Conscience/Fear of torture and ill-treatment

CHINA Yan Dongfei (m), aged 60] husband and wife
 Qiao Yongfang (f) aged 60]

Prisoners of conscience Yan Dongfei and Qiao Yongfang were detained on 8 June in the city of Hohhot (Huhehaote), in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in northern China. They are being held incommunicado at the No.1 Detention Center of Hohhot, where they are at serious risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Between 9-10pm on 8 June Yan Dongfei and Qiao Yongfang were forced into a black car by four or five plain-clothed men and taken away from their home. No official warrant for their detention was provided and family members were not notified. Upon enquiring, their family was told they were being held, but were prevented from visiting them.

In a conversation with a staff person at the Huimin District Internal Security Police, a family member was told that the couple had been detained because they were Falun Gong practitioners, and because they were distributing Falun Gong literature. The family member was also told that their case was “serious” and “complicated”, and that Yan Dongfei and Qiao Yongfang were not “cooperating” with the authorities. The staff person said that the couple’s situation might be “clearer” in one month.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Falun Gong is a spiritual movement. After a peaceful sit-in on Tiananmen Square in July 1999, the government outlawed the group and launched a campaign of intimidation and persecution, directed by a special organization called the 610 Office. The crackdown on Falun Gong intensified in the lead-up to the Olympics. Falun Gong sources reported over 8000 arrests of Falun Gong practitioners nationwide during this period, and say that in 2007 over 100 died in detention or shortly after being released due to torture, starvation and lack of medicine. Falun Gong practitioners are a primary target of China’s system of Re-education through Labour (RTL), a form of punitive administrative detention in which people can be deprived of their liberty without trial for up to four years.

Torture and other ill-treatment are endemic in all forms of detention, despite China’s ratification of the UN Convention against Torture in 1988. Amnesty International also receives regular reports of deaths in custody; many of them caused by torture, in a variety of state institutions, including prisons, Re-education through Labour facilities and police detention centres.

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

- urging the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Yan Dongfei and Qiao Yongfang, unless they are charged with an internationally recognized crime and tried promptly in proceedings which meet fair trial standards;
- calling on the authorities to provide guarantees for the safety of Yan Dongfei and Qiao Yongfang, and assurances that they will not be tortured or ill-treated;
- demanding they be given immediate access to their family and a lawyer of their choosing,

- expressing concern that they have been detained solely on account of their religious beliefs and as such are considered to be prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China

WEN Jiabao Guojia Zongli

The State Council

9 Xihuangcheng Genbeijie, Beijingshi 100032

People's Republic of China

Fax: + 86 10 65961109 or 2260 (c/o Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Email: gazette@mail.gov.cn

Salutation: Your Excellency

Chairman of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Regional People's Government

BAGATUR Zhuxi

Nei Menggu Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu

1 Xinhuaajie

Huhehaoteshi 010055

Nei Menggu Zizhiqu

People's Republic of China

Salutation: Dear Chairman

Huimin District Internal Security Police

Huiminqu Guobao dadui

Yang Duizhang

Gong'anju

Huiminqufenju

Huhehaoteshi 010050

Nei Menggu Zizhiqu

People's Republic of China

Salutation: Dear Director

Hohhot detention centre

Huhehaoteshi di yi he di san kanshousuo

Xinchengqu, Huqinggonglu, erlobangongshi

Huhehaoteshi 010031

Nei Menggu Zizhiqu

People's Republic of China

Salutation: Dear Director

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of China accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 July 2009.