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Fear of Ill-treatment

8 November 1991

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: Liu Gang
 Tang Yuanjuan
 Zhang Ming

 Li Wei
 Leng Wanbao
 Kong Xianfeng

A statement issued on 6 November by supporters of the above-named six prominent dissidents imprisoned in north-east China demands the release of all political prisoners and an end to prison beatings. The statement says that prisoners at the Lingyuan labour camp in Liaoning province are frequently beaten with fists, electrified batons and leather belts; they are forced to work up to 14 hours a day and beaten if their work does not come up to standard. The statement also says that prisoners are held in overcrowded cells and that medical care and nutrition is poor.

According to the statement these six dissidents, who are held at Lingyuan, are planning to start a hunger strike on 15 November in protest against the prison conditions and ill-treatment of prisoners. Liu Gang, Zhang Ming and Kong Xianfeng are all students and Tang Yuanjuan, Li Wei and Leng Wanbao are workers from the Changchun no. 1 Car Manufacturing Factory, (see AI's report, The Case of Tang Yuanjuan, ASA 17/47/91, July 1991). They have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from three to 20 years' following trials which do not meet internationally-recognized standards of fairness. They were charged with "counter-revolutionary crimes". Amnesty International considers that they are prisoners of conscience imprisoned for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of association and expression.

The Lingyuan labour camp of Liaoning province reportedly holds 30 political prisoners and several thousand ordinary criminals. Political prisoners are reportedly made to work longer hours than other prisoners and also have to undergo lengthy political education sessions before and after work. They are reportedly beaten if they fail to come up to the expected standards. According to reports, both Liu Gang and Zhangming were ill-treated in the camp earlier this year; one of Liu Gang's shoulders was reportedly injured as a result of beatings. Liu Gang was also reported to have been ill-treated while held in detention in Beijing before his transfer to Liaoning province. It is believed that he did not have access to medical treatment.

Amnesty International is concerned about the reported ill-treatment of prisoners at the Lingyuan labour camp. It is also concerned that the six prisoners may be punished and ill-treated as a result of the threatened hunger-strike.

BACKGROUND

The Lingyuan labour camp in Liaoning Province is known as the Lingyuan General Car Factory Training Brigade. Many convicted prisoners are sent to "reform through labour brigades". The purpose of "reform through labour" is to "punish all counter-revolutionary and other criminal offenders and to compel them to reform themselves through labour and become new persons". These penal brigades constitute a part or whole of a prison factory, farm or camp where offenders have to work a set number of hours per day.

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The planned hunger strike by the six prisoners is due to start on 15 November, the day the US Secretary of State James Baker arrives in Beijing. James Baker is the highest-level US official to visit China since the government crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in June 1989. Human rights are expected to be one of the issues discussed during his two-day visit to China.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/faxes/airmail letters:

- expressing concern that ill-treatment reportedly takes place at the Lingyuan labour camp of Liaoning Province and urging that these reports be impartially investigated in accordance with the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment ratified by China in 1988;

- expressing concern about the well-being of the six prisoners (Liu Gang, Tang Yuanjuan, Zhang Ming, Li Wei, Leng Wanbao and Kong Xianfeng); urging that they be treated in accordance with international standards for the treatment of prisoners and that they be released immediately and unconditionally.

APPEALS TO

1) Premier

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Your Excellency

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Dear Director

3) Procurator-General:

LIU Fuzhi Jianchazhang

Zuigao Renmin Jianchayuan

Donganmen Beiheyuan

Beijingshi

Dear Procurator

Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo
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Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN
(please forward to LIU Fuzhi Jianchazhang)

4) Governor of Liaoning Province:

Governor YUE Qifeng, Liaoning Province **Dear Governor**

Liaoningsheng Renmin Zhengfu

Shenyangshi

Liaoningsheng

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 80039 LFAO CN or 80040 SYFAO CN

(please forward to YUE Qifeng Shengzhang)

5) Chief Procurator of Liaoning Province:

Chief Procurator XU Sheng **Dear Procurator**

Zuigao Renmin Jianchayuan

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Beijingshi

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(please forward to XU Sheng Jianchazhang)

COPIES TO: Chinese diplomatic representatives in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 December 1991.