

PUBLIC

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22 January 2009

Further information on UA 305/08 (ASA/17/103/2008, 3 November 2008) – Fear of torture/incommunicado detention

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA Chen Zhenping (f), Falun Gong practitioner

Chen Zhenping was sentenced in August 2008, after a secret trial, to eight years imprisonment for "using a heretical organization to subvert the law".

Chen Zhenping's family fear that she is likely to be moved to a prison far from their home. Falun Gong members are often moved to prisons in regions far from their homes by the Chinese authorities. Such a move for Chen Zhenping would significantly increase her risk of torture as her family would find it difficult to visit her and would not be able to see how she is being treated.

Chen Zhenping has not been seen by her family since she was detained without a warrant on 9 July 2008. Her family were not informed until October that her trial and sentencing had already taken place. Chen Zhenping had no legal representation during her trial. Since learning of their daughter's sentencing her parents have hired a lawyer on her behalf.

Chen Zhenping's lawyer went to ask the Jingshui District People's court in Zhengzhou, Henan province, about her case in November 2008. A court official told him that Falun Gong practitioners did not have the right to hire lawyers.

On 5 December the lawyer asked Chen's 18-year-old daughter to go to the court and ask for the sentencing document. She made several attempts to get the document from the court and was repeatedly told to return at a later date. On 4 January, when she refused to leave the court without the document, a court employee punched, kicked her, pushed her to the ground and stamped on her chest until three other court employees intervened to stop her. The local Police have refused to investigate the incident.

The daughter returned to the court the following day and the employee who had beaten her gave her Chen Zhenping's sentencing document. The court employee informed Chen Zhenping's daughter that the deadline for filing an appeal had passed. Chen Zhenping's family are concerned she was tried and sentenced without having been questioned as personal details on the sentencing document are incorrect.

Chen Zhenping's lawyer has made repeated attempts to visit her at Zhengzhou City No.1 Detention Centre, where he believes she is being held. On 16 January he was told by the Jingshui District Prison Administration Bureau that she had been moved to a prison, but refused to disclose which one. A friend of the family's who works at the Jingshui District Prison Administration Bureau told them that Chen Zhenping is still being held at the Zhengzhou City No.1 Detention Centre. A fellow prisoner of Chen Zhenping who was recently released from Zhengzhou City No.1 Detention Centre has also stated that she was still there.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Falun Gong is a spiritual movement that gained large numbers of supporters in China during the 1990s. After a peaceful gathering in Tiananmen Square in July 1999, the government outlawed the group and launched a long-term 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 2008 over 100 died in custody or shortly after being released, due to torture, starvation and lack of medical treatment.

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

- asking the authorities where Chen Zhenping is held, and asking them to provide immediate guarantees for her safety, and assurances that she will not be tortured or ill-treated;
- urging the authorities to release Chen Zhenping immediately and unconditionally
- demanding she be given immediate access to a lawyer of her own choosing, her family and any medical treatment she may require;
- expressing concern that she has been imprisoned solely for her religious beliefs.

APPEALS TO:

Head of the Henan Province National Security Bureau

Wang Xusheng

Henan Province National Security Bureau

12 JingEr Lu

Zhengzhoushi

Henansheng

People's Republic of China

Salutation: Dear Director

President of the Supreme People's Court

Xiao Yang Yuanzhang

Zuigao Renmin Fayuan

27 Dongjiaomin Xiang, Beijingshi 100006

People's Republic of China

Fax: +86 10 65292345

Salutation: Dear President

Mayor of Zhengzhou City

ZHAO Jiancai Shizhang

Zhengzhoushi Renmin Zhengfu

233 Zhongyuanxilu

Zhengzhoushi 450007

Henansheng

People's Republic of China

Salutation: Dear Mayor

Director, Zhengzhou City No 1 Detention Centre

Zhengzhou shi Diyikanshousuo

Hanghailu yu Disandajie

Zhengzhoushi, Henansheng

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 5 March 2009.