

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 17/001/2005

06 January 2005

Further information on UA 280/04 (ASA 17/051/2004, 6 October 2004) and follow-up (ASA/17/057/2004, 24 November 2004) - Fear of torture

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA Mao Hengfeng (f)

Mao Hengfeng's sentence of 18 months in a "re-education through labour" camp has been extended by three months. Amnesty International fears this puts her at grave risk of further torture.

According to the NGO Human Rights in China, Mao's sentence extension was authorised in late December by "people in a senior position". Mao and her family were reportedly not permitted to see the documents authorising her sentence extension, and therefore the officials who ordered the sentence extension, and the precise reason they did so, are not known.

However, it is thought Mao's refusal to confess to any "wrongdoing", even under torture, or to sign documents acknowledging that she had undergone "thought reform" in detention, are factors which may have contributed to the extension of her sentence. In addition, officials at the camp have reportedly told Mao that her family visits and telephone privileges will be reduced if she continues to refuse to "confess".

Mao Hengfeng, a mother of two, was forced to have an abortion and dismissed from her job when she became pregnant for a third time 15 years ago, in contravention of China's family-planning policies. Since then, she has repeatedly followed official procedures to petition the authorities about her dismissal and against the treatment she suffered at the hands of the police. Because of this, she has been detained several times, and forcibly confined in psychiatric hospitals where she has been forced to undergo shock therapy.

In April 2004 Mao Hengfeng was sent to 18 months' "re-education through labour" because of her persistence in petitioning the authorities. She has reportedly been tortured on at least two occasions: in October 2004, she was tied up, suspended from a ceiling and beaten; in November 2004, she had straps tied to her wrists and ankles, and her limbs were pulled in different directions by officials at the camp demanding that she acknowledge her "wrongdoing". This was continued over a period of two days.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International receives numerous reports of torture and ill-treatment taking place in a wide variety of state institutions across China, including police stations, prisons and "re-education through labour" camps. Common methods of torture include kicking, beating, electric shocks, suspension by the arms, shackling in painful positions, and deprivation of sleep and food. Torture and ill-treatment such as forced abortions and sterilizations have also been reported as a result of China's family-planning policies.

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

- expressing concern that Mao Hengfeng's sentence has been increased;
- continuing to urge the authorities to release Mao Hengfeng immediately and unconditionally, and allow her to continue lawful petitioning without interference;
- continuing to urge the authorities to investigate and punish those found responsible for torturing Mao Hengfeng;

- calling on the authorities to abolish "re-education through labour," which is a form of administrative detention imposed without formal charge or trial.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister

WEN Jiabao Zongli

Guowuyuan

9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie

Beijing 100032, People's Republic of China

Fax: +86 10 6596 3374 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Mark “Please forward to Premier Wen Jiabao”)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

ZHANG Fusen Buzhang

Ministry of Justice

10 Chaoyangmen Nandajie, Chaoyangqu

Beijing 100020, People's Republic of China

Fax: +86 10 64729863

Email: pfmaster@legalinfo.gov.cn (Mark "Please forward to the Minister of Justice")

Salutation: Your Excellency

Director of Re-education-Through-Labour Bureau, Ministry of Justice

LI Rulin Juzhang

Bureau of Re-education-Through-Labour Administration

Ministry of Justice

10 Chaoyangmen Nandajie

Chaoyangqu

Beijing 100020, People's Republic of China

Fax: +86 10 64729863

Email: pfmaster@legalinfo.gov.cn (Mark "Please forward to Director Li Rulin")

Salutation: Dear Director

State Population and Family Planning Commission

ZHANG Weiqing Zhuren

Director of the State Population and Family Planning Commission

14 Zhichun Road

Haidian District

Beijing 100088, People's Republic of China

Email: gjjsw@chinapop.gov.cn

Salutation: Dear Director

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of 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 17 February 2005.