

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 17/025/2004

UA 197/04

Medical concern/prisoner of conscience

08 June 2004

PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC
OF CHINA

Xiao Yunliang (m) – workers' representative

Amnesty International is deeply concerned over recent reports that the health of prisoner of conscience Xiao Yunliang has continued to deteriorate and that he is still being refused adequate medical treatment in Shenyang No. 2 Prison, Liaoning Province.

According to a 7 June report by *Radio Free Asia* (RFA), Xiao's abdomen has become severely distended, and he cannot eat without experiencing pain or vomiting. He is also said to be suffering from "heart trouble". Xiao's lawyer is quoted as saying "The prison should at least give him some treatment. For someone as sick as he is, he should at least receive a certain level of treatment inside the prison." News of Xiao Yunliang's worsening health comes in the wake of previous reports that he is also suffering from symptoms associated with tuberculosis, pleurisy, hypertension, and that his eyesight is on the point of failing.

His daughter, Xiao Yu, was reportedly told by provincial police authorities that Xiao Yunliang would need to apply for a "medical treatment permit" from Shenyang No. 2 Prison before treatment would be considered. She is also reportedly being made to re-apply for a permit from city and provincial authorities each time she wants to visit her father.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Labour unrest has been increasing throughout China in recent years due to the closure of many State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and resulting unemployment of thousands of workers. In March 2002, Xiao Yunliang and other the workers' representatives were involved in organizing large-scale demonstrations in Liaoyang city, Liaoning Province, which involved up to 30,000 workers from around 20 factories in the city. The workers were protesting against layoffs, alleged management corruption and delayed welfare payments. The factory and the local government reportedly met some of the demands relating to back pay and medical expenses, but a number of the protest leaders were arrested and sentenced to prison terms.

Xiao Yunliang was detained in March 2002 together with a number of fellow activists. Along with fellow detainee Yao Fuxin, Xiao Yunliang was tried on 15 January 2003 on charges of "subversion" and "organizing illegal demonstrations". On 9 May 2003 Xiao Yunliang was sentenced to four years' imprisonment and Yao Fuxin to seven years' imprisonment. Their families had previously been harassed by the police and told not to participate in any public protest, nor to petition the central authorities nor to communicate with the media. They have also had visits to Xiao Yunliang and Yao Fuxin curtailed. (See UA 104/02, ASA 17/019/2002, 5 April 2002 and follow ups).

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

- calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Xiao Yunliang and all workers held in Liaoyang on charges originating from their peaceful protests;
- expressing concern at reports that Xiao Yunliang, held in Shenyang No. 2 Prison in Liaoning Province, is suffering from numerous serious complaints including tuberculosis, pleurisy, hypertension;
- urging the authorities to provide him with access to appropriate medical care as a matter of urgency;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that he has unfettered access to members of his family and lawyers of his choice.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of the Liaoning Provincial People's Government

BO Xilai Shengzhang

Liaoningsheng Renmin Zhengfu

Huangguqu, 45 Beiling Dajie

Shenyangshi 110032

Liaoningsheng

People's Republic of China

Telegram: Governor of Liaoning Provincial People's Government, Liaoningsheng, People's Republic of China

Fax: + 86 24 8689 2112

Salutation: Dear Governor

Director of the Liaoning Provincial Department of Justice

LI Chengyi Tingzhang

Sifating

Chongshan Donglu 38 Jia,

Shenyangshi 110032

Liaoningsheng

People's Republic of China

Telegram: Director of the Liaoning Provincial Department of Justice, Liaoningsheng, People's Republic of China

Fax: + 86 24 8690 6792

Salutation: Dear Director

President of the People's Republic of China

HU Jintao Guojia Zhuxi

The State Council General Office

Yongneixijie

Beijingshi 100017

People's Republic of China

Telegram: President Hu Jintao, Beijing, People's Republic of China

Salutation: Your Excellency

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 20 July 2004.