

Public

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To: Health professionals
China coordinators
From: Medical team/Asia program
Date: 20 July 2004

MEDICAL ACTION

CHINA:

Ill-health of Dr Wang Bingzhang, imprisoned medical doctor and activist

Amnesty International is concerned about the deteriorating health of Dr Wang Bingzhang, a medical doctor and leading activist, who has been kept in solitary confinement in Shaoguan prison since his initial detention on suspicion of "terrorism" and other charges, in July 2002.

In January this year the authorities stopped all contact between him and his family and Dr Wang began a hunger strike in protest against his life sentence. He fell unconscious and later suffered a severe stroke and was hospitalized for more than a month.

A sister was allowed to visit Dr Wang at the end of June and has told AI that she found him in a distraught, weak state.

AI is also concerned that Dr Wang's trial was held in secret and thus failed to meet international standards for fair trial. No arrest warrant was reportedly issued at the time of his arrest.

Background information

Dr Wang was detained in July 2002 near to the Sino-Vietnamese border. Many reports claim that he was kidnapped by Chinese security agents while still in Vietnam and taken to China. Dr Wang was previously imprisoned in China in the 1960s for dissident activities and after defecting to the US became a leading activist having set up various opposition groups to press for free elections and democracy within China.

Dr Wang was tried in secret on 22 January 2003 by the Shenzhen Intermediate People's Court in Guangdong Province, and sentenced on 10 February 2003 to life imprisonment. The Court found him guilty of various offences, including passing military secrets to Taiwan, plotting to blow up the Chinese embassy in Thailand, advocating assassinations and kidnappings and leading a "terrorist group". None of the evidence used to convict Dr Wang has ever been made public, and there are concerns that the charges were politically motivated. This is the first known case of terrorism charges being used to convict a pro-democracy activist in China.

Several Chinese dissident groups and Dr Wang's family and lawyers have challenged the verdict, saying that the charges against him are false. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruled in July 2003 that Dr Wang Bingzhang's arrest and detention is arbitrary and in contravention of various articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Among other things, AI is urging the Chinese authorities to provide immediate and appropriate medical treatment to Dr Wang.

Recommendations

Please write letters in English to the authorities below, using professionally-headed paper if you use this in your profession:

- introducing yourself in your professional capacity and/or as a member of Amnesty International;
- expressing concern that Dr Wang Bingzhang is being held arbitrarily and that he has suffered a stroke and other ailments during his imprisonment;
- expressing concern that Dr Wang has been held in solitary confinement for two years;
- urging the authorities to provide Dr Wang with access to full and appropriate medical care;
- expressing concern that Dr Wang's trial was held in secret and calling for a retrial which should meet international standards for fair trial;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that Dr Wang continues to receive access to members of his family and lawyers of his choice;
- Invite a response.

Addresses

Governor of the Guangdong Provincial People's Government
HUANG Huahua Shengzhang
Guangdongsheng Renmin Zhengfu
305 Dongfeng Zhong Lu
Guangzhoushi 510031
Guangdongsheng
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Governor

Director of the Guangdong Provincial Department of Justice
Wang Xudong Tingzhang
Sifating
26 Cangbianlu, Yuexiuqu
Guangzhoushi 510030
Guangdongsheng
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Director

Copies:

Director of Shaoguan Prison
P.O. Box 10-22
Shiliting, Huanggang
Shaoguan City
Guangdongsheng 512032
People's Republic of China

Salutation: Dear Director.

Thank you for any appeals you are able to send.

Please send copies of any replies received to the medical team at the International Secretariat: medical@amnesty.org