

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 92/94 Medical concern

7 March 1994

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: Bao Tong, aged 60, prisoner of conscience

There is serious concern about the health of Bao Tong, a prisoner of conscience serving seven years' imprisonment for his activities during the 1989 pro-democracy movement. During a visit on 16 February 1994 to Qincheng Prison in Beijing, where he is held in solitary confinement, his family were shocked at the deterioration of his health and his harsh living conditions, and have appealed to the international community for help.

According to the most recent medical examination doctors have carried out, Bao Tong has developed a variety of new ailments which have caused his face to swell: a thyroid tumour, swollen lymph nodes and constricted salivary glands. He already suffers from a reduced white blood cell count, chronic gastritis as well as growths in his colon and intestines, 17 of which have been removed in six separate operations. Such growths generally indicate a pre-cancerous condition which requires regular medical examination and specialized care. It is not known whether the growths which have been removed were found to be malignant.

Bao Tong's family have been denied access to his medical records and have not been given the opportunity to meet with the doctors to ascertain whether his condition is cancerous, or to determine what sort of medical treatment he is receiving. His family have sent 54 written appeals to the authorities, all of which have gone unanswered. In the latest appeal written on 24 February 1994, Bao Tong's son, Bao Pu, called on the authorities to grant the family access to Bao Tong's doctors and medical records and respond to their repeated requests for Bao Tong to be released on medical parole. He also requested that his father's living conditions improve, that he be provided with nutritious food, be permitted to shower more frequently and be allowed to use a tape recorder to exercise his voice, which has become hoarse from lack of opportunity to speak.

Amnesty International is concerned that Bao Tong is in a critical condition and fears he may not survive two more years in detention without proper medical care and an improvement in his diet.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Bao Tong was a senior official of the Chinese Communist Party before his arrest in May 1989 for allegedly leaking secret information about the decision to impose martial law in Beijing in late May 1989. He was charged with "leaking state secrets" and carrying out "counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement" and sentenced in July 1992 to seven years' imprisonment at a secret trial to which his family were refused entry. His appeal against his sentence was rejected in August 1992.

This Urgent Action also updates UA 28/92 (ASA 17/11/92, 24 January 1992) and its follow-ups (ASA 17/39/92, 7 July; ASA 17/41/92, 22 July; and ASA 17/46/92, 11 August).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters - expressing concern at reports of Bao Tong's critical health condition which

requires proper medical care that he may not be able to obtain in prison;
 - urging that he be released immediately to seek medical treatment at home.

APPEALS TO:

1) Premier of the State Council

Li Peng Zongli

Guowuyuan

9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie

Beijingshi 100032

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN

Faxes: + 86 1 512 5810

(via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Telegrams: Premier Li Peng, Beijing, China

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Minister of Justice of the People's Republic of China

XIAO Yang Buzhang

Sifabu

Xiaguangli

Sanyuanqiao

Chaoyang Qu

Beijingshi 100016

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN

(Please forward to Xiao Yang Buzhang)

Faxes: + 861 467 7351

Telegrams: Minister of Justice Xiao Yang, Beijing, China

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Beijing Daily

34 Xi Biaobei Hutong

Dongdan

Beijing 100743

Faxes: + 861 512 6581 (If possible, please fax copies to this newspaper)

and 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 18 April 1994.