

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 149/93 (ASA 17/18/93, 10 May 1993) - Death resulting from torture/fear of torture

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC):Lai Manping and other Christians

The Chinese authorities have denied allegations that a group of Christians were severely beaten by police in late March 1993 in Shaanxi province. They also deny that Lai Manping's death was caused by these beatings. Amnesty International is concerned by the government's perfunctory response to the serious allegations made about this incident. The organization is further concerned that the Chinese authorities have in the past consistently dismissed well-documented reports of torture of prisoners, when these concerned political prisoners or members of ethnic or religious groups detained by police. It urges the government to disclose the details of the investigation reportedly carried out into the Xunyang incident, including the time at which the investigation took place, the authorities which carried it out and the procedures followed.

In written responses to letters of concern about the incident, diplomatic representatives of the PRC in several European countries stated in early June 1993 that "there was no such case as the persecution of Christians in Xunyang county, Shaanxi province", that Lai Manping was a farmer and not a Christian and that he had died of a heart attack. While denying the allegations of ill-treatment and arrests of Christians in the area following the incident, they did not deny that Lai Manping had been detained by police, but did not confirm it either. They mentioned an "investigation" into the incident, but without specifying how, when and by whom it had been carried out.

The incident was publicized outside China in early May 1993, when a detailed eye-witness testimony, together with reports from other unofficial sources and photographs of two of the victims became available. According to these sources, the incident had occurred in the evening of 27 March 1993 in the village of Taoyuan, in Xunyang county, when a group of police officers broke into a religious meeting attended by some 26 local Christians and five others who had come from the neighbouring county of Ankang. Without explanation, police reportedly started beating those present with truncheons and put handcuffs on the five Christians from Ankang, two of whom were women. The Ankang Christians, including Lai Manping, were then repeatedly beaten by police. The local Christians were forced to take part in the beating, under threat of being beaten themselves. The Ankang Christians were then held for eight days in a local police station. Lai Manping was in a very bad state due to the beatings and was released when police realized he might die in custody. He crawled a few kilometres away from the police station and died shortly after being found by local farmers.

These reports also stated that Lai Manping's family had formally complained in April to the local police about his death. As a result the Xunyang county Public Security Bureau

performed a perfunctory autopsy and claimed he had died of sickness. The police also reportedly arrested many Christians in the area to prevent information about the incident from spreading and to cover up Lai Manping's death.

According to the official version of the incident, on 27 March 1993, 21 year-old farmer Lai Manping had gone from Ankang to Taoyuan village, in Xunyang county, along with two "accomplices", and "seriously disturbed the public order there by organizing an illegal meeting". This was "stopped" by local police the following day. "Lai Manping was then beaten up with bamboo sticks by local people who had become enraged by his unlawful activities" and was "slightly injured" on his back. He died in Taoyuan village on 6

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April 1993 "as a result of a heart attack brought on by a lung ailment". "The investigation of the incident has established that Lai Manping was not a Christian", the official response further said. It also denied that 26 Christians and a child and two women had been ill-treated by police.

The speed and substance of the official response raises doubts as to whether any genuine investigation has been carried out. These doubts are heightened by earlier reports that police in Xunyang county attempted to cover up the incident immediately after it took place.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing concern at reports that a group of Christians were severely beaten up by local police on 27 March 1993 in Taoyuan village of Xunyang county, Shaanxi province, and that Lai Manping from Ankang county died as a result;

- noting that official reports deny these allegations and urging the authorities to disclose details of the investigation reportedly carried out into the incident, including when, by which authority and how it was carried out;

- urging that any further investigation into this case be carried out by an impartial judicial authority from outside the administrative area where the incident occurred.

APPEALS TO:

1) Minister of Justice of the People's Republic of China:

XIAO Yang Buzhang

Sifabu

Xiaguangli

Beijingshi 100016

People's Republic of China

Telegram: Minister of Justice Xiao Yang, Beijing, China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN (Please forward to Xiao Yang Buzhang)

Faxes: + 861 467 7351

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate of the People's Republic of China:

ZHANG Siqing Jianchazhang

Zuigao Renmin Jianchayuan

147 Beiheyang Dajie

Donganmen, Dongchengqu

Beijingshi 100726

People's Republic of China

Telegram: Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate Zhang

Siqing, Beijing, China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN

Salutation: Dear Procurator-General

(Please forward to Zhang Siqing Jianchazhang)

Faxes: + 861 512 6655 ext.1053 (phone first)

3) Governor of the Shaanxi Provincial People's Government:

BAI Qingcai Shengzhang

Shaanxisheng Renmin Zhengfu

Xixin Jie

Xi'an Shi 710004

Shaanxisheng

People's Republic of China

Telegrams: Governor Bai Qingcai, Xian, Shaanxi Province, China

Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO: diplomatic representatives of PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA accredited to your country. The World Conference on Human Rights is being held in Austria this month and you can enhance the power of your appeals by also sending copies to the diplomatic representative of China in Austria during June at the following address:

EMBASSY OF CHINA:

The Ambassador

Botschaft der Volksrepublik China

Metternichgasse 4, 1030 Wien

Austria

Faxes: + 43 1 713 68 16

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 July 1993.