

PUBLIC

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Fear of torture or ill-treatment/ prisoner of conscience

CHINA

Bu Dongwei (also known as David Bu), (m), aged 38, Falun Gong practitioner

Bu Dongwei, also known as David Bu, was assigned to two-and-a-half years' "Re-education through Labour" (RTL) on 19 June in connection with his activities as a member of the Falun Gong spiritual movement. He is detained at an undisclosed location, and Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience. He is at serious risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Bu Dongwei had been working in Beijing for the US aid organization, the Asia Foundation, before he was detained by around seven police officers at his home in the Haidian district of the capital, Beijing, on 19 May. According to the decision of Beijing's RTL committee, which has the power to impose periods of arbitrary detention without charge or trial, he was accused of 'resisting the implementation of national laws' and 'disturbing social order'. The evidence cited was a verbal confession he made to police, and 80 copies of Falun Gong literature that the police discovered in his home. He is due to be released on 18 November 2008.

Bu Dongwei's family have disputed the evidence against him, claiming that the police discovered no more than eight Falun Gong books when they detained him. Despite repeated requests to the authorities, his family have not been told where he is being detained. Unofficial sources suggest that he may have first been taken to Qinghe detention centre, Haidian district, and transferred to Tuanhe RTL facility in Beijing on 21 August, but this remains unconfirmed.

Bu Dongwei had previously served a term of ten months' RTL from August 2000 to May 2001 in Tuanhe RTL facility for 'using a heretical organization to disrupt the implementation of the law' after he petitioned the authorities asking them to review their ban on Falun Gong. During this period, he was reportedly subjected to torture and ill-treatment, including being made to sit all day in a small chair as well as beatings and sleep deprivation aimed at forcing him to renounce his belief in Falun Gong.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been arbitrarily detained in China since the spiritual movement was banned as a "threat to social and political stability" in July 1999. Those accused of being Falun Gong leaders or organizers have been sentenced to prison terms, while others have been held in psychiatric hospitals. The vast majority, however, have been held in RTL facilities, a form of administrative detention imposed without charge, trial or judicial review. Torture or ill-treatment of detained Falun Gong practitioners has reportedly been widespread, particularly against those who refuse to renounce their beliefs in Falun Gong.

Overseas Falun Gong organizations have documented over 2,000 deaths in custody of Falun Gong practitioners since the crackdown began. It has recently been alleged that a large number of deaths in custody may be the result of enforced 'organ harvesting' from Falun Gong detainees so that their organs can be used for transplants. Amnesty International is investigating these reports, but is currently unable to independently verify these allegations.

"Re-education through Labour" (RTL) continues to be used extensively in China despite repeated calls from both inside and outside China for the system to be abolished. The Beijing authorities recently approved the use of RTL to target vagrants and petty criminals in their attempts to 'clean up' the city before it hosts the Olympics in 2008. Attempts by the authorities to replace RTL with new legislation known as the "Illegal Behaviour Correction Law" (IBCL) have stalled. Amnesty International considers that the new law fails to

meet international fair trial standards and continues to urge the authorities to abolish the system altogether by bringing all offences punishable with deprivation of liberty within the scope of the Criminal Law.

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

- expressing concern that Bu Dongwei is detained in violation of his fundamental human rights to freedom of expression, association and religious belief, and calling on the authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally;
- calling on the authorities to immediately disclose his place of detention to his family and to allow them to conduct regular family visits while he remains in custody;
- urging the authorities to ensure that he has access to lawyers and any necessary medical treatment while he remains in detention;
- calling on the authorities to end the political crackdown against the Falun Gong spiritual movement, which has resulted in numerous human rights violations;
- urging the authorities to abolish "Re-education through Labour" (RTL) and ensure that all offences punishable with deprivation of liberty are brought within the scope of the Criminal Law.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China

WEN Jiabao Guojia Zongli

The State Council

9 Xihuangcheng Genbeijie, Beijingshi 100032

People's Republic of China

Fax: + 86 10 65961109 or 2260 (c/o Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Email: gazette@mail.gov.cn

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice of the People's Republic of China

WU Aiyang Buzhang

Sifabu

10 Chaoyangmen Nandajie, Chaoyangqu

Beijingshi 100020

People's Republic of China

Fax: + 86 10 65292345

Email: minister@legalinfo.gov.cn

Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Public Security of People's Republic of China

ZHOU Yongkang Buzhang

Gong'anbu

14 Dongchang'anjie, Beijingshi 100741

People's Republic of China

Fax: + 86 10 63099216 (it may be difficult to get through; please keep trying)

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Director of the Beijing Public Security Bureau

MA Zhenchuan Juzhang

Beijingshi Gong'anju

9 Qianmen Dongdajie, Dongchengqu

Beijingshi 100740, People's Republic of China

Email: 110@bjgaj.gov.cn

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 10 October 2006.