

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 17/057/2004

24 November 2004

Further Information on UA 280/04 (ASA 17/051/2004, 6 October 2004) - Fear of torture

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA Mao Hengfeng (f)

Mao Hengfeng has reportedly been tortured in custody, and Amnesty International believes that she is at high risk of further torture.

According to information obtained by the NGO Human Rights in China, on 10 November police at the labour camp where Mao Hengfeng is held bound her wrists and ankles with leather straps and then pulled her limbs in different directions, while demanding that she acknowledge her "wrongdoing". This was continued over two days, and left her with injuries on her wrists and ankles.

Mao Hengfeng was forced to have an abortion, and dismissed from her job, when she became pregnant in violation of China's family-planning policies 15 years ago. She has been protesting through official channels ever since, and is now imprisoned at a "re-education through labour" camp in Shanghai because of her years of campaigning against China's family-planning policies.

Many people have openly supported Mao Hengfeng. At one point, people reportedly gathered outside the labour camp calling out her name, and it is possible that she was tortured because of this public support.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mao Hengfeng, a mother of two, was forced to have an abortion, and dismissed from her job, when she became pregnant for a third time 15 years ago. Since then, she has repeatedly followed official procedures to petition the authorities about her dismissal and against the treatment she suffered at the hands of the police. Because of this, she has been detained several times, and forcibly confined in psychiatric hospitals where she has been forced to undergo shock therapy.

In April 2004 Mao Hengfeng was sent to 18 months' "re-education through labour" because of her persistence in petitioning the authorities. There she has reportedly been tied up, suspended from the ceiling and severely beaten.

Amnesty International receives numerous reports of torture and ill-treatment taking place in a wide variety of state institutions across China, including police stations, prisons and "re-education through labour" camps. Common methods of torture include kicking, beating, electric shocks, suspension by the arms, shackling in painful positions, and deprivation of sleep and food. Torture and ill-treatment such as forced abortions and sterilizations have been reported as a result of China's family-planning policies.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Mao Hengfeng, who was reportedly tortured on 10-11 November at a "re-education through labour" camp in Shanghai;
- urging the authorities to release Mao Hengfeng immediately and unconditionally, and allow her to continue lawful petitioning without interference;
- urging the authorities to investigate and punish those found responsible for torturing Mao Hengfeng;

- calling on the authorities to abolish "re-education through labour," which is a form of administrative detention imposed without formal charge or trial.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China

WEN Jiabao Zongli

Guowuyuan

9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie

Beijing 100032

People's Republic of China

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice of the People's Republic of China

ZHANG Fusen Buzhang

Ministry of Justice

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Fax: +86 10 64729863

Email: pfmaster@legalinfo.gov.cn (Mark "Please forward to the Minister of Justice")

Salutation: Your Excellency

Director of the Shanghai Bureau of Justice

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People's Republic of China

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Salutation: Dear Director

Director of the Shanghai Bureau of Public Security

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Salutation: Dear Director

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of People's Republic of China accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 January 2005.