

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 17/103/2008

3 November 2008

UA 305/08

Fear of torture

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Chen Zhenping (f), Falun Gong practitioner

Falun Gong practitioner Chen Zhenping was arrested without a warrant on 9 July at her home in the city of Zhengzhou, Henan province. Her family have not been allowed to visit her, and it is unclear where she is now held. She is in grave danger of torture.

She was first held for 10 days at Matougang Village Detention Centre, and then moved to Zhengzhou City No.1 Detention Centre. Zhengzhou City Jingshui People's Court officials told one of her relatives on 10 October that Chen Zhenping had been sentenced to between seven and 15 years' imprisonment. However, the family have not been served an official notification of a trial by court authorities.

After Chen was arrested, her family contacted lawyers in Zhengzhou to represent her. The lawyers told them that before the Olympic Games the government had warned them not to take Falun Gong cases. Chen is therefore unlikely to have had legal representation, making any trial that took place unfair.

On 28 October Chen's family discovered that her signature had been forged on the register where detainees are required to sign when they receive provisions from relatives and friends.

According to a fellow inmate, Chen Zhenping has been held in a cell with over 30 people and forced to sleep on the floor. She was reported by a former cell-mate to have been forced to work up to 19 hours a day producing rugs, Q-tips and other goods, with strict production targets: if she did not meet these targets she was beaten and otherwise ill-treated.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Falun Gong is a spiritual movement that gained large numbers of adherents in China during the 1990s. After a peaceful sit-in on Tiananmen Square in July 1999, the government outlawed the group and launched a long-term campaign of intimidation and persecution, directed by a special organization called the 610 Office. The crackdown on Falun Gong intensified in the lead-up to the Olympics. Falun Gong sources reported over 8000 arrests of Falun Gong practitioners nationwide during this period, and say that in 2007 over 100 died in detention or shortly after being released due to torture, starvation and lack of medicine. Falun Gong practitioners are a primary target of China's system of Re-education through Labour (RTL), a form of punitive administrative detention in which people can be deprived of their liberty without trial for up to four years. Between 300,000 and 500,000 people are estimated to be under RTL.

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

- asking the authorities where Chen Zhenping is held, and asking them to provide immediate guarantees for her safety, and assurances that she will not be tortured or ill-treated;
- asking them to release Chen Zhenping immediately and unconditionally unless she is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- demanding she be given immediate access to a lawyer of her own choosing, her family and any medical treatment she may require;

-- expressing concern that she has been imprisoned solely for her religious beliefs.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Supreme People's Court
Xiao Yang Yuanzhang
Zuigao Renmin Fayuan
27 Dongjiaomin Xiang, Beijingshi 100006
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 65292345
Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Justice Director,
Wu Aiying Buzhang
Sifabu
10 Chaoyangmen Nandajie
Chaoyangqu, Beijingshi 100020
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 65292345
Email: pfmaster@legalinfo.gov.cn
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mayor of the Zhengzhou City People's Government
ZHAO Jiancai Shizhang
Zhengzhoushi Renmin Zhengfu
233 Zhongyuanxilu
Zhengzhoushi 450007
Henansheng
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Mayor

Zhengzhou City No 1 Detention Centre
Zhengzhou shi Diyikanshousuo
Hanghailu yu Disandajie
Zhengzhoushi, Henansheng
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Director

COPIES 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 15 December 2008.