



To: Health Professional Network

From: Health and Human Rights Team

Date: 22 February 2006

## **Health professional action**

### **Zhang Shanguang**

#### **China**

(Also see letter-writing actions ASA 17/003/2003, 15 January 2003, and ASA 17/37/2000, 6 September 2000)

### **Summary**

Amnesty International is very concerned for the health of Zhang Shanguang, a prisoner of conscience in Hunan No. 1 Prison, China, who is suffering from active tuberculosis (TB). He is reported to be coughing persistently. He has also lost most of his teeth through decay. Zhang Shanguang is said to be receiving medical treatment only when his condition becomes critical; once his health improves, the treatment is stopped – in contravention of WHO recommended treatment for TB. Amnesty International calls for Zhang Shanguang to be provided with appropriate medical treatment and for his immediate and unconditional release.

### **Background information**

#### *DOTS treatment*

A commonly used (and WHO recommended) approach to the treatment of TB is DOTS (directly observed treatment short course) in which the drugs of choice -- the most common anti-TB drugs used are isoniazid, rifampicin, pyrazinamide, streptomycin, ethambutol and thioacetazone – are taken by the patient for six to eight months. If treatment is inconsistent the patient may develop multi-drug resistant TB, which is more difficult and expensive to treat. Whilst receiving irregular treatment Zhang Shanguang's health is at further risk; other prisoners and prison staff are also at risk of contracting the disease.

#### *Political background*

Zhang Shanguang, a former teacher and trade union activist, is believed to have contracted TB during a previous detention from 1989 to 1996 for his involvement in the 1989 pro-democracy protests. In 1998 he was detained again, convicted and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment plus five years' deprivation of political rights for "illegally supplying

intelligence to hostile organizations”. Zhang was the founder of the local ‘Shu Pu Association to Protect the Rights and Interests of Laid-off workers’ and it is believed that his arrest was partly in connection with his plans to register his organization.

#### *Contact with family*

Zhang’s family is reportedly only able to visit him once a year, because the journey to the prison takes them three days. The visits are limited to about 10 minutes each time. Zhang is not allowed telephone contact with his family, and cannot receive any letters. According to ex-prisoners he is monitored closely at all times, has little freedom of movement and is not even allowed to talk to other inmates.

### **Recommended action**

Please write to the authorities below, using the following as a guideline:

- Explain that you are a health professional and are writing about the case of Zhang Shanguang in Hunan No. 1 prison;
- Express concern at reports that Zhang Shanguang is suffering from tuberculosis and that his treatment reportedly has been inconsistent, in contradiction with WHO recommended treatment;
- Urge the authorities to provide him with access to full and appropriate medical care immediately;
- Asking the authorities to allow Zhang to communicate with his family at regular intervals both by correspondence as well as by receiving visits, in accordance with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners;
- Urging the authorities to release Zhang Shanguang, imprisoned solely for the non-violent expression of his political opinion consistent with his rights under international law;
- Invite a response.

### **Addresses**

Governor of the Hunan Provincial People’s Government  
Zhou Bohua Shengzhang  
Hunansheng Renmin Zhengfu  
69 Wuyizhonglu  
Changshashi 410011  
Hunansheng  
China

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 65292345 (c/o Ministry of Communication)  
Email: gazette@mail.gov.cn  
Salutation: Your Excellency

Director of Hunan Provincial Prison  
Liu Wanqing Juzhnag  
Hunansheng Jianyu Guanliju  
98 Bayi si Lu  
Changsha shi  
Hunan sheng 410001  
Tel: +86 731 4592781  
Email: WebMaster@hunan.gov.cn (c/o Hunan Provincial People's Government)  
Salutation: Dear Director

Director of Prison Management Department of Minister of Justice of the  
People's Republic of China  
Zhao Lei Juzhang  
10 Chaoyangmen Nandajie  
Chaoyangqu  
Beijingshi 100020  
People's Republic of China  
Fax: +86 10 64729863 or 65292345  
Email: minister@legalinfo.gov.cn or pfmaster@legalinfo.gov.cn  
Salutation: Dear Director

Please also write to diplomatic representatives of China accredited to your country.

If you receive no reply within six weeks of sending your letter, please send a follow-up letter seeking a response. Please send copies of any letters you receive to the International Secretariat, attention of Health and Human Rights Team.