

PUBLIC

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UA 94/07 **Fear for safety**

CHINA **Shi Fukui (m), rights activist, aged 40**

Rights activist Shi Fukui has been beaten and threatened with death after he encouraged local people to vote against the allegedly corrupt chief of his village in eastern China's Jiangsu province. He has since fled the village with his family, and Amnesty International believes his life may be in danger.

Shi Fukui has been campaigning for some years against corrupt officials in his village, Tanhu, which is part of Lizhuang town, Ganyu county.

Some village officials, reportedly including the village chief, have threatened to kill Shi Fukui and his family. According to other villagers, they have used the village's public address system to do this. On 4 April, a local village official reportedly broke into Shi Fukui's home and beat him and his wife in front of their two-year-old son. This apparently left Shi Fukui with bruising to his face and his wife with temporary deafness in one ear. The official reportedly threatened to beat Shi Fukui's 82-year-old father and kill Shi Fukui and his family, suggesting that this could be done in a "car accident". His father has reportedly become seriously ill as a result of the intimidation and harassment.

Shi Fukui had reportedly suffered similar beatings at the hands of the village chief and his assistant after he was summoned to the village chief's office on 27 November 2006. Shi Fukui reported this to the police, but they apparently took no action.

Shi Fukui had become well-known locally, particularly after he challenged the decision of the Ganyu county family planning committee to fine him and his wife for having a second child without permission. The couple considered the fine to be disproportionately high (RMB16,000, approx US\$2,000, rather than the local legal limit of RMB10,000) and believed that the extra money would be pocketed by local officials. When they disputed the decision, the family planning committee reportedly increased the fine to over RMB28,000 (approx. US\$3,600).

On 8 July 2006, local gang members, apparently instigated by family-planning officials, abducted Shi Fukui's wife from the family home, throwing the couple's baby son to the ground in the process. She was detained at the local family planning office, but released later the same day after Shi Fukui's brother, who lives in Canada, called the office threatening to publicise the case internationally and sue the local authorities for breaking Chinese law.

From around 2002, Shi Fukui had built a reputation locally for challenging policies which he considered corrupt or abusive, including alleged illegal taxation of local farmers, overcharging for school education, and abuses of workers' rights. He highlighted many of these issues in a letter sent to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2004. Some of his activities, which often included generating publicity for alleged abuses, successfully brought pressure to bear on the authorities and led to redress in some cases. His efforts reportedly encouraged other villagers to use the full range of lawful procedures to challenge local officials who they considered to be corrupt.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Growing numbers of villagers and rural activists in China are attempting to win justice for various abuses, including illegal levying of fines and taxation, which often appear to result from corruption among local officials. Such disputes have sometimes escalated into public protests, leading to confrontations between

villagers and the police, some of which have turned violent. Official Chinese statistics suggest that incidents of social unrest in both urban and rural areas are increasing, with the total number of officially recorded "mass incidents" rising from 74,000 in 2004 to 87,000 in 2005.

Some villagers have tried to vote out allegedly corrupt officials in village-level elections. Officially these elections have been touted as an important form of grassroots democracy, but they are often marked by serious procedural flaws and abuses, and activists attempting to promote free and fair elections have suffered threats, harassment and abuse.

Serious human rights violations are regularly reported as a result of the implementation of China's family planning policies. In a recent case, activist Chen Guangcheng was imprisoned for over four years after he attempted to win redress for forced abortions and sterilizations, allegedly perpetrated by local officials in Linyi city, Shandong province.

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

- urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of Shi Fukui and his family
- urging the authorities to conduct a full and impartial investigation into the allegations that Shi Fukui and his family have been beaten and threatened with death, and to bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Shi Fukui can continue his peaceful human rights activities free from fear of death threats, arbitrary detention and harassment;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that all human rights defenders in China are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities in line with constitutional guarantees on the protection of human rights and international human rights standards.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister

WEN Jiabao Guojia Zongli
The State Council, 9 Xihuangcheng Genbeijie
Beijingshi 100032, People's Republic of China
Email: gazette@mail.gov.cn
Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Director of the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Public Security

HUANG Ming Tingzhang
Jiangsusheng Gong'anting, 1 Yangzhoulu, Nanjingshi 210024
Jiangsusheng, People's Republic of China
Fax: **+86 25 8352 6577**
Salutation: **Dear Director**

Governor of the Jiangsu Provincial People's Government

LIANG Baohua Shengzhang
Jiangsusheng Renmin Zhengfu, 68 Beijing Xilu, Nanjingshi 210024
Jiangsusheng, People's Republic of China
Email: zgjs@js.gov.cn
Fax: **+86 25 8663 1399**
Salutation: **Dear Governor**

COPIES TO:

Secretary of the Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee

LI Yuanchao Shuji
Zhonggong Jiangsusheng Weiyuanhui, 70 Beijingxilu, Nanjingshi 210013
Jiangsusheng, People's Republic of China
Salutation: **Dear Secretary**

and to diplomatic representatives of the 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 31 May 2007.