

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 186/98 (ASA 17/20/98, 2 July 1998) - Torture / Fear of torture and ill-treatment / Fear for safety

**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA Zhu Shengwen, aged 51, former vice-mayor of Harbin,
Heilongjiang province
Fan Zhen (f), wife of Zhu Shengwen**

Zhu Shengwen, in prison since October 1996, is suffering serious medical problems, including abnormally high blood pressure and heart disease. His sight is said to be failing markedly. He has severe back pain which prevents him from standing upright and he needs to use a walking stick. His health problems could be the result of the severe torture he has suffered and poor prison conditions. Although he has seen a doctor in prison his deteriorating condition indicates that he urgently needs a full medical examination so that he can receive appropriate treatment.

His wife, Fan Zhen, was released on 19 October 1998. In early October her lawyer approached the authorities and was told that no verdict had been reached on her case. However, the following day the lawyer was called to the court and told that Fan Zhen had been found guilty and sentenced to one year and eight months' imprisonment, accounting almost exactly for the time she had already spent in prison. She has lost her job and has no income.

At the Harbin Detention Centre, Fan Zhen reportedly had to share a cell with more than 100 criminal prisoners. The overcrowding was so severe that she had to sleep on her side because there was not enough room to lie flat. A bucket in the centre of the cell served as a communal toilet. The prison food was inadequate and of very poor quality and she was not allowed to exercise outdoors. She was reportedly threatened with reprisals against her husband if she did not behave well in prison.

In December 1998 Zhu Shengwen's sentence was reduced on appeal from life to 17 years' imprisonment reportedly after high-level political intervention. He was not present at the appeal hearing. His sentence may yet be further reduced. To date there has been no investigation into the brutal torture he suffered.

He is now in Harbin No.3 Prison, a "model" prison, where conditions are reported to be better than those of the detention centre he was held in before. He is in a cell with about 40 criminal prisoners and is allowed to take daily outdoor exercise and watch television. His family can visit him, and they send a monthly food payment to supplement the poor quality prison food. However, he is due to be transferred this week to Gezhi prison, in Tailai county, a few hundred kilometres north-west of Harbin. This will make it much more difficult for his family to visit, particularly his wife Fan Zhen.

A number of other people detained in connection with the allegations of corruption made against Zhu Shengwen have also been tried and sentenced. Others' cases are still being processed by the judicial system. In view of the lack of fair process evident in the cases of Zhu Shengwen and Fan Zhen, Amnesty International is concerned that these people will not have received fair trials in accordance with international standards.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Chinese or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the very poor state of Zhu Shengwen's health and urging that he be given a full medical examination and all appropriate treatment as a matter of urgency;
- in view of Zhu Shengwen's poor health, urging the Chinese authorities to consider releasing him on medical parole;
- continuing to urge the authorities to launch a thorough and impartial investigation into the allegations of torture and other illegalities in Zhu Shengwen's case;
- also urging the authorities to undertake an investigation into the trial proceedings used in the cases of Zhu Shengwen, Fan Zhen and others detained in connection with them.

APPEALS TO:

President of the People's Republic of China

JIANG Zemin Guojia Zhuxi / Beijingshi / People's Republic of China

Telegrams: President Jiang Zemin, Beijing, China

Salutation: Your Excellency

Premier of the People's Republic of China

ZHU Rongji Zongli / Guowuyuan / 9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie / Beijingshi 100032 / People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN

Telegrams: Premier Zhu Rongji, Beijing, China

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President of the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China

XIAO Yang Yuanzhang / Zuigao Renmin Fayuan / 27 Dongjiao Min Xiang / Beijingshi 100726 / People's Republic of China

Telegram: President of the Supreme People's Court, Beijing, China

Salutation: Dear President

Chairman of the National People's Congress

LI Peng Weiyuanzhang / Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui / Great Hall of the People / Beijingshi / People's Republic of China

Chairman of the National People's Congress, Beijing, China

Salutation: Dear Chairman

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 12 May 1999.