

# URGENT ACTION

## CHINESE ACTIVIST RELEASED DUE TO POOR HEALTH

**Chinese human rights defender Mao Hengfeng was released on 28 July, about a month before the end of her term of Re-education Through Labour (RTL), due to poor health.**

**Mao Hengfeng** was sent home in a wheelchair from Shanghai Prison Hospital without any advance notice to her family. When her family saw her outside their house she was unconscious and in very poor health. She regained consciousness shortly after but still had no strength to talk or stand up.

According to the formal notice of her release, the Shanghai City Re-education Through Labour Management Department decided to end Mao Hengfeng's RTL early because "she has serious high blood pressure and should get treatment in a public hospital".

Concerned about Mao Hengfeng's health situation, her husband, Wu Xuewei, requested the Shanghai authorities send her to a nearby motel together with the family and monitor her until her health situation stabilized. (There have been previous cases in Shanghai where detainees have died several days after being sent home in very poor health, and the family have then been blamed for the death, with no way of bringing the police and authorities to justice).

On 29 July, her family tried to take her to a public hospital, but around 10 police officers guarding the motel would not allow her to leave. They told her family, "Shanghai is hosting 14th FINA World Championships till 31 July, for social stability reasons people like Mao Hengfeng are not allowed to go out." Now that the FINA World Championships are over, Mao Hengfeng is allowed to go out but remains under surveillance.

On 31 July, Mao Hengfeng's health showed signs of improvement and she started to talk and walk slowly. She told Amnesty International that when she was taken to Shanghai Prison Hospital on 24 February, she was beaten in the police car continuously until they arrived. She lost consciousness for about half an hour. When she woke up, she found herself on a hospital bed and her blood was being taken for tests. Thereafter she was kept alone in a prison hospital cell. Police in the hospital asked other prisoners to monitor her daily. She was not allowed to get down from her bed, except to go to the toilet. She was not allowed to write letters or contact her family, and was not allowed to shower or bathe. If she moved without permission, even just to walk around in the cell, she was beaten. Authorities in Shanghai hospital told an inmate assigned to monitor her, that if they took pity on Mao and did not perform their monitoring duty well, they would be subjected to prolonged detention.

Mao Hengfeng was assigned to 18 months' RTL punishment on 4 March 2010. She was unexpectedly released on medical parole on 22 February. On 24 February she was re-detained and taken to Shanghai Prison Hospital for violating the terms of her medical parole. Mao Hengfeng's health condition was already poor when she arrived at the prison hospital, due to the torture she had suffered in RTL.

Amnesty International will continue to closely monitor Mao Hengfeng's situation and take further action as appropriate.

**No further action is required from the UA network. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.**

This is the fourth update of UA 95/10. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA17/034/2011/en>.

Name: Mao Hengfeng

Gender m/f: Female

Further information on UA: 95/10 Index: ASA 17/039/2011 Issue Date: 10 August 2011

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