

EXTERNAL

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Prisoners of conscience / Health concern /  
Torture / Ill-treatment

5 June 1997

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA LIU Nianchun, 49, labour activist  
ZHOU Guoqiang, lawyer  
GAO Feng, Christian activist.

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Liu Nianchun, a labour activist from Beijing detained in Shuanghe labour camp, Heilongjiang province, in the far northeast of China, is reported to have been tortured and placed in solitary confinement in harsh conditions after going on hunger-strike some 10 days ago.

According to his family, Liu Nianchun went on hunger-strike to protest against his imprisonment and plans to increase his sentence by six months because he refused to admit to having committed "crimes". He was then placed in a dark punishment cell measuring two square metres, with access to very little water, and tortured by camp officials with an electro-shock baton applied all over his body, his relatives said. On 30 May 1997, Wu Huifen, his 81-year-old mother, also went on hunger-strike at her home in Beijing to protest at her son's treatment.

Liu Nianchun has been in poor health for some time. According to his family, he suffers from festering sores in his jaw, a blocked intestine, rectal bleeding and severe stomach cramps, but he has not received appropriate medical care at the camp. It is feared that his health may further deteriorate in solitary confinement. Conditions at Shuanghe labour camp are generally described as harsh, with prisoners being subjected to heavy labour and given insufficient food, while medical treatment is often denied and, when granted, inadequate.

Two other dissidents held at Shuanghe camp, Zhou Guoqiang and Gao Feng, are also reported to have recently gone on hunger-strike to protest at increases in their sentences. It is feared that they too may be subjected to punishments for this protest. At least one of them is known to be ill - Zhou Guoqiang's health is reported to have seriously deteriorated in the past two years due to hard labour and other conditions at the camp, where he has been held since 1994. He is believed to suffer from tuberculosis, heart problems and nephritis, but his ailments have not been properly diagnosed or treated. Little is known about Gao Feng's situation.

Amnesty International considers Liu Nianchun, Zhou Guoqiang and Gao Feng to be prisoners of conscience, arbitrarily detained for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and association, in violation of international human rights standards (see below).

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Liu Nianchun was first apprehended on 21 May 1995 and held without charge or trial for 14 months. He was then assigned to a three-year term of re-education through labour on 4 July 1996. He was accused of drafting a petition calling on the government to re-evaluate the crackdown against pro-democracy demonstrators in 1989, of accepting illegal aid from human rights organizations abroad and of trying to form a group to promote the protection of workers' rights.

Liu Nianchun was first held at Tuanhe labour camp near Beijing where he was beaten by other inmates at the instigation of the prison guards. He was denied

treatment for the injuries he sustained. He was already weak and had serious health problems which was confirmed at the time by a doctor at Tuanhe labour camp. On 10 July 1996 he was transferred to Shuanghe camp.

Like Liu Nianchun, Zhou Guoqiang and Gao Feng are from Beijing and serving administrative sentences of three years of "re-education through labour", imposed without charge or trial, because of their peaceful activities to promote democratic reforms, labour rights and human rights' improvements. While held at Shuanghe labour camp, Zhou Guoqiang's sentence was increased by one year for an alleged escape attempt in 1995 and more recently by three months for reasons that are not known. Gao Feng's sentence is reported to have been increased by two months at an unknown date.

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

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Liu Nianchun, Zhou Guoqiang and Gao Feng, arbitrarily detained for the peaceful exercise of their fundamental human rights, in violation of international standards;
- expressing grave concern at reports that Liu Nianchun has been tortured and placed in solitary confinement in harsh conditions for protesting against his detention and treatment at Shuanghe labour camp and that he is in poor health and has not received appropriate medical treatment;
- calling for an impartial and open inquiry into the reports, for Liu Nianchun's confinement in a punishment cell to end, and for him to be granted all necessary medical treatment without delay;
- expressing concern for Zhou Guoqiang and Gao Feng who are also reported to have gone on hunger-strike, and about reports that Zhou Guoqiang is in poor health and has not received adequate medical treatment.

**APPEALS TO:**

Premier of the People's Republic of China

**LI Peng** Zongli

Guowuyuan

9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie

Beijingshi 100032

People's Republic of China

**Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN**

**Telegram: Premier Li Peng, Beijing, China**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Governor of the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Government

**Tian Fengshan** Shengzhang

Heilongjiangsheng Renmin Zhengfu

202 Zhongshanlu

Haerbinshi 150001

Heilongjiangsheng

People's Republic of China

**Telegrams: Governor, Provincial People's Government, Haerbin, Heilongjiang Province, China**

**Salutation: Dear Governor**

Chief Procurator of the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Procuratorate

**YU Wanling** Jianchazhang

Heilongjiangsheng Renmin Jianchayuan

127 Zhongshanlu

Haerbinshi 150001  
Heilongjiangsheng  
People's Republic of China  
**Telegrams: Chief Procurator, Provincial People's Procuratorate, Haerbin,  
Heilongjiang Province, China**  
**Salutation: Dear Sir**

**COPIES TO:**

Director of Shuanghe labour camp  
Laogai Suozhang  
Shuanghe nongchang  
Gannanxian 2213  
Heilongjiang Sheng 162105  
People's Republic of China

and to diplomatic representatives of 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 22 July 1997.