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To: Health professionals
From: Medical office / China sub-regional team
Date: 6 September 2000

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Zhang Shanguang
CHINA**

Key words: ill health / denial of care / forced labour

Summary

According to reports received by Amnesty International, the former teacher and trade union activist, Zhang Shanguang, has a serious lung illness which is believed to be tuberculosis but is being forced to do hard physical work in fetters despite his poor health. When he tried to stop working he was reportedly beaten. Zhang Shanguang is currently held in Hunan Province No. 1 prison. Amnesty International calls for his release as a prisoner of conscience and urges the Chinese authorities to properly investigate Zhang Shanguang's health and to ensure that he receive whatever treatment is recommended by competent doctors.

Recommended actions

Letters are requested, in English or your own language, to the addresses below. Letters from chest physicians would be particularly welcome.

Letters should:

- introduce yourself as a health professional concerned with the defence of human rights in all countries of the world;
- express concern about the situation of Zhang Shanguang, currently in Hunan No. 1 prison;
- setting out the basis of your concerns: you could mention first your belief that his reported lung disease requires urgent investigation and implementation of whatever treatment program is recommended. You could express concern at reports that Zhang is required to carry out work while ill and that he is said to be held in fetters during this work. Call for clarification of the reports that he has been beaten. Ask for clarification of all these reports;
- you could then express concern at this detention in the first place as he appears not to have carried out any activity which is not permitted under international law;

- ask to be kept informed of his situation.

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow up letter seeking a response. Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 6 November 2000, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

Addresses

President of the People's Republic of China

JIANG Zemin Guojia Zhuxi
Beijingshi
People's Republic of China
Telegram: President Jiang Zemin, Beijing, China
Salutation: Your Excellency

Director of the Reform-Through-Labour Administration of the Ministry of Justice of the People's Republic of China

WANG Mingdi Juzhang
Laodong Gaizao Gongzuo Guanliju
14 Dongchang'anlu
Dongchengqu
Beijingshi 100741
People's Republic of China
Telegram: Director of the Reform-Through-Labour-Administration of the Ministry of Justice, Beijing, China
Salutation: Dear Director

Governor of the Hunan Provincial People's Government

CHU Bo Shengzhang
Hunansheng Renmin Zhengfu
7 Wuyizhonglu
Changshashi 410011
Hunansheng
People's Republic of China
Telexes: 98182 CSPG CN (Please forward the governor)
Telegram: Governor, Changsha, Hunan Province, China
Salutation: Dear Governor

Prison Director

Jiayu Zhang
Hunan Provincial Prison No 1
Huansheng di yi Jiayu
PO Box 101
Xinyuan Lu
Nanzui
Yuanjiangshi
Hunansheng 413104
People's Republic of China

Copies

Chinese Medical Association
42 Dongsi Xidajie
Beijing 100710
China
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Fax: +86 10 6512 3754

and to diplomatic representatives of China accredited to your country.

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MEDICAL CONCERN

**Zhang Shanguang
CHINA**

According to reports received by Amnesty International, the former teacher and trade union activist, Zhang Shanguang, has a serious lung illness but is being forced to do heavy physical work in fetters despite his poor health. When he tried to stop working he was reportedly beaten. Zhang Shanguang is currently held in Hunan Province No. 1 prison. Amnesty International calls for his release as a prisoner of conscience and urges the Chinese authorities to properly investigate Zhang Shanguang's health and to ensure that he receive whatever treatment is recommended by competent doctors.

Zhang's current situation

Zhang is believed to have contracted tuberculosis while detained under the 'reform through labour' program from 1989 when he was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for his involvement in the 1989 pro-democracy protests. He currently is reported to be suffering from a "lung illness" and to be often spitting blood. During his recent period of detention, he has started to suffer from dizziness putting him at risk of falling. However reports have consistently said that the prison authorities have denied him the medical examination and treatment he needed and they allege that he has been sent to carry out the hardest type of physical labour work in the prison.

Zhang was transferred to Hunan No. 1 prison in or around June 2000. Prior to transfer he had been detained in Hunan Province Huaihua Municipality Detention Centre for two years.

Background

Zhang was detained on 21 July 1998, and formally arrested on 28 August 1998, accused of "illegally supplying intelligence to hostile organizations and people in external territory". One of charges against him was based on an interview Zhang gave to the US-funded Radio Free Asia when he spoke, among other things, about peasant demonstrations in Hunan Province.

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. On 27 December 1998 Zhang was convicted and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, plus five years' deprivation of political rights. The trial took two hours and 20 minutes and took place behind closed doors. When his wife arrived at the court, she was refused entry and reportedly told that she could not enter as the trial would involve information that should not be made public.

In January 1999 he appealed -- unsuccessfully -- against his sentence.

Zhang may be suffering from a reoccurrence or worsening of tuberculosis which he appears to have contracted whilst he was imprisoned for seven years for activities during the 1989 pro-democracy protests. Zhang had been previously sentenced in September 1989 and was released on January 15 1996 with three years of deprivation of political rights.

Amnesty International's concerns

Amnesty International regards Zhang Shanguang as a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for the non-violent expression of political opinion consistent with his rights under international law. The organization is also concerned at reports of Zhang's continuing ill health and believes that he should immediately be given a proper medical diagnosis and appropriate treatment as recommended by competent doctors. If he does have tuberculosis he is at serious risk; other prisoners and prison staff are also at risk of contracting the disease. The reported use of fetters on a prisoner is incompatible with human rights standards. The Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners state that implements such as fetters "shall never be applied as punishment" and that "chains or irons shall not be used as restraints" (Rule 33). The use of fetters on a sick prisoner forced to carry out physical labour would be a particularly aggravated abuse. AI is urging an immediate end to the use of fetters.

Amnesty International discussed Zhang Shanguang's case in a medical action in 1999. See: *Medical care in prisons - China*. AI Index: ASA 17/33/99, 16 August 1999.