

EXTERNAL

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UA 186/96 Prisoner of conscience / Health Concern /
Ill-treatment

25 July 1996

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA Liu Nianchun, aged 48, labour activist

Veteran dissident and prisoner of conscience, Liu Nianchun, is reported to have been beaten in detention and is feared to be seriously ill.

Liu Nianchun was transferred to Shuanghe Labour camp from Tuanhe Labour camp on 10 July 1996. In Tuanhe he was reportedly subjected to beatings by the "head" of a group of fellow prisoners. Amnesty International fears that he may be facing further ill-treatment by inmates in Shuanghe, possibly with the tacit approval of prison officials.

According to his wife, Chu Hailan, who visited him at the camp last week after being notified on 5 July that he had been sentenced to three years' re-education through labour, Liu Nianchun has lost more than 20 kilograms in weight since his arrest on 21 May 1995 and is passing blood in his stools - apparently the sign of a potentially serious intestinal condition. He has reportedly undertaken a five-day hunger-strike in protest at his detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Liu Nianchun, a signatory to two 1995 petitions calling for democratic reforms, has been held without charge or trial for over a year. He was recently accused of drafting a petition in collaboration with former student leader Wang Dan and of accepting illegal aid from human rights organizations abroad. The petition was signed by 45 signatories and called on the Chinese government to release political prisoners and institute political tolerance.

On 5 July 1996, Chu Hailan was informed by police that her husband had been ordered to serve three years' re-education through labour in a forced labour camp. "This is completely unreasonable, this is not in accordance with the law" Chu Hailan said. "He will serve three years starting this year, so that is effectively a four-year term. And for doing what? He has committed no crime".

Chu Hailan was then ordered by the authorities in Beijing to meet her husband at the Tuanhe labour camp near Beijing and to bring along some personal possessions and 300 yuan. When she arrived at the camp, the authorities announced that Liu Nianchun had already been transferred to the Shuanghe labour camp in the remote northeastern Heilongjiang Province, hundreds of kilometres away from Beijing.

When Chu Hailan visited her husband last week at Shuanghe, she was strip-searched by guards before she left the camp. Furthermore, she was herself reportedly detained for three and a half hours on 24 July by the local Haidian district Police bureau, and warned not to "stir up trouble". Since she visited Liu Nianchun, she has appealed to the Chinese authorities to provide her husband with proper medical care, and she is planning to use a letter written by him to appeal for his release and to demand compensation for what he has described as his "illegal detention". Since Liu Nianchun's arrest, Chu Hailan has been closely monitored and regularly followed by the Public Security Bureau (police) restricting her freedom of movement and association.

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

- demanding the immediate and unconditional release of Liu Nianchun;

- demanding that he be given immediate medical treatment and a proper medical examination;
- demanding that reports of beatings by fellow inmates or the "head" of a prisoner group in Tuanhe Labour camp be investigated, and calling for immediate measures to ensure that Liu Nianchun is not ill-treated.

APPEALS TO:

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

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Salutation: Dear Director

Minister of Public Health of the People's Republic of China

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Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22193 (Please transfer to the Public Health Minister)

Telegrams: Minister Public Health, Beijing, China

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mayor of Beijing Municipal People's Government

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Faxes: + 86 106 512 1158 (Please forward to the Mayor)

Telegrams: Mayor, Beijing, China

Salutation: Dear Sir

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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 15 September 1996.