

To: Health professionals
From: Medical team /Asia program
Date: 11 November 2003

MEDICAL ACTION

China: ill-health of Xiao Yunliang and Yao Fuxin, prisoners of conscience

Key words: ill health/prisoners of conscience

Amnesty International Concern

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the poor health of Xiao Yunliang (57) and Yao Fuxin (53). Both are prisoners of conscience and trade union activists from Liaoning province. Their health has reportedly deteriorated rapidly since they were both transferred on 8 October from Jinzhou Prison to Lingyuan Prison, close to the Inner Mongolian border, where prison conditions are reportedly harsh. Their families have to travel 12 hours by road to visit them.

According to their families who last visited them on 22 October, the two men believe that due to the lack of medical treatment and the seriousness of their medical conditions they may die in prison.

Xiao Yunliang has reportedly been diagnosed by prison doctors to be suffering from severe pleurisy, high blood pressure and heart disease. He has frequent violent chest pains and experiences great difficulty talking. He is reportedly denied exercise because there are no guards available to lead him around the exercise yard and is so ill and blind he cannot exercise on his own. Earlier on in the year Xiao Yunliang was diagnosed by prison doctors at the Liaoyang Municipal Detention Centre as being virtually blind in both eyes.

Prior to his transfer to Lingyuan Prison, Yao Fuxin had reportedly been admitted to the hospital at Jinzhou Prison where he was being detained, having suffered repeatedly from heart failures over several months. On one occasion he reportedly collapsed in the shower, only regaining consciousness after prison staff provided emergency care. He is also said to be suffering from severe hypertension, suffering a hearing impediment due to a lesion in his eardrum and experiencing difficulty walking due to a skin graft on one of his feet which has severely atrophied. Yao Fuxin has also reportedly been denied exercise after fainting twice since his transfer.

Amnesty International is calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Yao Fuxin and Xiao Yunliang as prisoners of conscience and for appropriate medical treatment in accordance with agreed international standards while they remain in custody.

Background

Xiao Yunliang and Yao Fuxin were detained in March 2002, together with a number of fellow activists, for their roles in organising peaceful demonstrations against the laying-off of thousands of working men and women by state owned companies in Liaoyang city in north-east China. The two men were tried on 15 January 2003 on charges of “subversion” and “organizing illegal demonstrations”. In May 2003 they were sentenced to four and seven years imprisonment respectively. Both appealed but their appeals were rejected.

Amnesty International previously expressed concern for the health of Xiao Yunliang and called on the provincial authorities to grant his immediate release. (See Medical Action: China - Ill health of Xiao Yunliang, prisoner of conscience, ASA 17/021/2003, 19 May 2003).

Recommended Actions

Please write letters in English to the authorities below, using professionally-headed paper if you use this in your profession:

- introducing yourself in your professional capacity and/or as a member of Amnesty International;
- expressing concern that Xiao Yunliang and Yao Fuxin have been imprisoned on account of their peaceful protests and urge they be released immediately and unconditionally;
- expressing grave concern at reports of the ill-health of Xiao Yunliang and Yao Fuxin, held in Lingyuan Detention Centre;
- urging the authorities to provide them with access to immediate and appropriate medical care while they remain in custody;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that Xiao Yunliang and Yao Fuxin have immediate and regular access to members of their families and lawyers of their choice.

Addresses

Governor of the Liaoning Provincial People's Government
BO Xilai Shengzhang
Liaoningsheng Renmin Zhengfu
Huangguqu, 45 Beiling Dajie
Shenyangshi 110032
Liaoningsheng
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Governor

Director of the Liaoning Provincial Department of Justice
ZHANG Jiacheng Tingzhang
Sifating
Chongshan Donglu 38 Jia,
Shenyangshi 110032
Liaoningsheng
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Director

Prison Governor
Jianyu Zhang
Lingyuan di er Jianyu
Liaoningsheng 122500
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Prison Governor

Copies of appeals

Please send copies of your appeals to diplomatic representatives of China accredited to your country.

Thank you for any appeals you are able to make.

If you receive no reply from the authorities within six weeks of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow-up letter seeking a response, referring to your previous letter(s). Please send copies of any replies you receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).