

URGENT ACTION

FALUN GONG PRACTITIONERS RISK TORTURE IN CHINA

An elderly couple in China's Henan province have been arrested as a result of their beliefs. They are facing criminal charges and are at risk of torture and other forms of ill-treatment while in detention.

Approximately 30 plainclothes police officers broke into the apartment of **Yao Guofu**, 63 and **Liang Xin**, 62 in Nanyang, Henan province on 5 December 2015. According to family members, police officers took them into custody, confiscated two computers, four printers and ten large boxes filled with Falun Gong materials.

They were criminally detained on 6 December 2015 by the Nanyang Public Security Bureau on the charges of "using a heretical organization to subvert the law". The Wolong District prosecutor's office approved their arrest on the same charges on 12 January, and they are now awaiting possible indictment and a subsequent court trial – the final phases of the Chinese criminal justice system. They are being held at the Nanyang City Number One Detention Centre.

According to family members, Yao Guofu has been beaten by fellow detainees, but detention centre guards have not intervened to stop the beatings.

Please write immediately in Chinese, English or your own language:

- Demanding that the authorities immediately and unconditionally release Yao Guofu and Liang Xin, as they have been imprisoned solely for exercising their right to freedom of belief and expression;
- Urging them to ensure that Yao Guofu and Liang Xin are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, that they are immediately provided with any medical treatment they require, and that the conditions of their detention adhere to international law and standards;
- Calling on them to ensure Yao Guofu and Liang Xin have regular access to their family, and lawyers.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 MAY 2016 TO:

Director

Lu Jianyuan
Nanyang City Number One Detention
Centre
Wancheg, Nanyang,
Henan 473005,
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 377 3222146

Salutation: Dear Director

Director,

Zhu Haijun
Nanyang Public Security Bureau
Zhangheng Road, Wancheng,
Nanyang, Henan,
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 377 6331 1110
Email: 498110796@qq.com

Salutation: Dear Director

And copies to:

Governor of Henan Province
Xie Fuzhan
Henan Sheng Renmin Zhengfu
Nongye Lu Dong 28 hao
Hennan Ribao Baoye Dasha
11 Lou Dong Bangongting
People's Republic of China

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR LIU XIAOMING, Embassy of the People's Republic of China, 49-51 Portland Place W1B 1JL, 020 7299 4049, press_uk@mfa.gov.cn, www.chinese-embassy.org.uk, Salutation: Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The spiritual movement Falun Gong was banned in China as a "threat to social and political stability" after its practitioners held a peaceful sit-in on Tiananmen Square in July 1999. The government established a dedicated office, referred to as the "610 Office", responsible for overseeing the crackdown on the Falun Gong and other "heretical cults", with offices operating from the central level down through provincial and local party and government organs.

Since then, tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been arbitrarily detained where the mission is to "transform" them by forcing them into renouncing their spiritual beliefs, often through the use of torture and ill-treatment. The vast majority of Falun Gong practitioners were held in Re-education Through Labour (RTL) facilities until this form of administrative detention was abolished in 2013. The Chinese authorities are increasingly using alternative channels of arbitrary detention, as well as criminal prosecutions of individuals who previously may have been sent to RTL.

Torture and other ill-treatment are endemic in all forms of detention, although China ratified the UN Convention Against Torture in 1988. Amnesty International also receives regular reports of deaths in custody, many of them caused by torture, in a variety of state institutions, including prisons and police detention centres. Other inmates and cell bosses are used by detention centre and prison authorities to monitor the behaviour of fellow inmates and mete out punishment including subjecting resistant detainees to sleep deprivation, stress positions, as well as other physical and mental forms of torture or other ill-treatment.

The criminal justice system in China is roughly divided into three distinct phases: the investigation phase conducted by the police; the prosecution phase, in which the prosecutors approve of the initial evidence needed to arrest a suspect and engages in further investigation to decide whether to indict a suspect; and the final trial phase carried out by the courts. In China in 2015, the conviction rate was higher than 99.9%, as in previous years. It is strategically important to voice concern in earlier phases of the criminal justice process – most notably, before the decisions to arrest or indict suspects are made.

Name: Yao Guofu (m) and Liang Xin (f)

Gender: Both

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