

URGENT ACTION

FALUN GONG PRACTITIONER SAID TO HAVE BEEN TORTURED IN DETENTION

Falun Gong practitioner Chen Huixia was unable to stand or walk after being tortured, according to a fellow detainee. Suffering from chronic illness and poor health, she currently has no access to her family or a lawyer.



Chen Huixia, along with eight other Falun Gong practitioners, was taken away by police in Shijiazhuang Municipality, Hebei Province, on 3 June 2016. Her family was only notified on 16 July that she was being criminally detained in the Shijiazhuang Municipal No. 2 Detention Centre on the suspicion of “using an evil cult to undermine law enforcement”.

A Falun Gong practitioner who was taken away with Chen Huixia, but has since been released, told her daughter that Chen Huixia, 59, had been strapped to a chair with metal bars and tortured to the point of being unable to stand or walk. She was further subjected to “brainwashing” sessions to get her to renounce her belief.

Chen Huixia’s nephew visited the detention centre on 12 August but was prevented from seeing her. One of the lawyers that was approached by her relatives, which include a judge and a police officer, said that the authorities would not allow him to take the case. No direct contact has been made with Chen Huixia since June and without any access to a lawyer, her family fear for her well-being.

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

- Urging authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Chen Huixia, as she has been detained solely for exercising the right to freedom of belief and expression.
- Urging the authorities to ensure that while detained, Chen Huixia is protected from torture or other ill-treatment, and that her treatment is in accordance with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).
- Pending her release, urging the authorities to ensure that she has prompt, regular and unrestricted access to her family and lawyers of her choice, and medical care on request or as necessary, .

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 NOVEMBER 2016 TO:

Director of Shijiazhuang Municipal No. 2 Detention Centre
Shijiazhuang Shi Dier Kanshousuo
Zhaoling Lu, Changan Qu,
Shijiazhuang Shi
Hebei Sheng, 050000
People’s Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Director

Director of Shijiazhuang Municipal Public Security Bureau
Liu Sheng,
Shijiazhuang Shi Gong’an Ju
66 Yuannan Lu, Qiaodong Qu
Shijiazhuang Shi
Hebei Sheng 050000
People’s Republic of China
Tel: +86 311 8686 2222 (Chinese only)
Salutation: Dear Director

Governor of Hebei Province
Zhang Qingwei,
Hebeisheng Renmin Zhengfu
113 Yuhudong Lu, Changan Qu
Shijiazhuang Shi
Hebei Sheng 050000
People’s Republic of China
Tel: +86 311 8790 2359 (Chinese only)
Salutation: Dear Governor

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

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to her daughter, Chen Huixia started practicing Falun Gong in 1998 to heal her chronic illness and poor health. She was consequently detained for about three months in 2003 and following her release her family has been subjected to persistent harassment and intimidation by authorities.

The spiritual movement Falun Gong was banned in China for being a "threat to social and political stability" after its practitioners held a peaceful sit-in on Tiananmen Square in July 1999. In response, the government established a dedicated office, the "610 Office", to oversee the crackdown on the Falun Gong and other "heretical cults".

As a result, tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been arbitrarily detained and, often through the use of torture and other ill-treatment, made to renounce their spiritual beliefs. Since the 2013 abolition of "Re-Education Through Labour" (RTL) facilities, Chinese authorities are using alternate methods of arbitrary detention, including the criminal prosecution of individuals.

Torture and other ill-treatment are endemic in all forms of detention, although China ratified the UN Convention Against Torture in 1988. Amnesty International receives regular reports of deaths in custody, often caused by torture. 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 police-led investigation, 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. Similar to previous years, the conviction rate in 2015 was higher than 99.9%, making it very important to voice concerns as early in the criminal justice process as possible, preferably before the decisions to arrest or indict suspects are even made.

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