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URGENT ACTION

**China: Fear of torture or ill-treatment/
prisoner of conscience: Bu Dongwei (also
known as David Bu), (m)**PUBLIC AI Index: ASA 17/049/2006
29 August 2006UA 232/06 Fear of torture or ill-treatment/ prisoner of
conscienceCHINA Bu Dongwei (also known as David Bu), (m), aged 38, Falun
Gong practitioner

Bu Dongwei, also known as David Bu, was assigned to two-and-a-half years' "Re-education through Labour" (RTL) on 19 June in connection with his activities as a member of the Falun Gong spiritual movement. He is detained at an undisclosed location, and Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience. He is at serious risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Bu Dongwei had been working in Beijing for the US aid organization, the Asia Foundation, before he was detained by around seven police officers at his home in the Haidian district of the capital, Beijing, on 19 May. According to the decision of Beijing's RTL committee, which has the power to impose periods of arbitrary detention without charge or trial, he was accused of 'resisting the implementation of national laws' and 'disturbing social order'. The evidence cited was a verbal confession he made to police, and 80 copies of Falun Gong literature that the police discovered in his home. He is due to be released on 18 November 2008.

Bu Dongwei's family have disputed the evidence against him, claiming that the police discovered no more than eight Falun Gong books when they detained him. Despite repeated requests to the authorities, his family have not been told where he is being detained. Unofficial sources suggest that he may have first been taken to Qinghe detention centre, Haidian district, and transferred to Tuanhe RTL facility in Beijing on 21 August, but this remains unconfirmed.

Bu Dongwei had previously served a term of ten months' RTL from August 2000 to May 2001 in Tuanhe RTL facility for 'using a heretical organization to disrupt the implementation of the law' after he petitioned the authorities asking them to review their ban on Falun Gong. During this period, he was reportedly subjected to torture and ill-treatment, including being made to sit all day in a small chair as well as beatings and sleep deprivation aimed at forcing him to renounce his belief in Falun Gong.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been arbitrarily detained in China since the spiritual movement was banned as a "threat to social and political stability" in July 1999. Those accused of being Falun Gong leaders or organizers have been sentenced to prison terms, while others have been held in psychiatric hospitals. The vast majority, however, have been held in RTL facilities, a form of administrative detention imposed without charge, trial or judicial review. Torture or ill-treatment of detained Falun Gong practitioners has reportedly been widespread, particularly against those who refuse to

Urgent Actions

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renounce their beliefs in Falun Gong.

Overseas Falun Gong organizations have documented over 2,000 deaths in custody of Falun Gong practitioners since the crackdown began. It has recently been alleged that a large number of deaths in custody may be the result of enforced 'organ harvesting' from Falun Gong detainees so that their organs can be used for transplants. Amnesty International is investigating these reports, but is currently unable to independently verify these allegations.

"Re-education through Labour" (RTL) continues to be used extensively in China despite repeated calls from both inside and outside China for the system to be abolished. The Beijing authorities recently approved the use of RTL to target vagrants and petty criminals in their attempts to 'clean up' the city before it hosts the Olympics in 2008. Attempts by the authorities to replace RTL with new legislation known as the "Illegal Behaviour Correction Law" (IBCL) have stalled. Amnesty International considers that the new law fails to meet international fair trial standards and continues to urge the authorities to abolish the system altogether by bringing all offences punishable with deprivation of liberty within the scope of the Criminal Law.

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