

URGENT ACTION

FEMALE ACTIVIST DETAINED FOR EXPOSING RTL

Anti-corruption activist Liu Hua, a woman who exposed abuses in China's Re-Education Through Labor (RTL) system, has been criminally detained on the charge of "picking quarrels and making troubles". It is widely believed that she is being punished by the authorities for appearing in a documentary that exposed the torture and other ill-treatment of the RTL system. She is a prisoner of conscience and should be immediately and unconditionally released.

Liu Hua was first detained on 10 March in Beijing by public security bureau officers from Shenyang, Liaoning Province. She was transferred back to Shenyang, where she lives, and is now being held at the Shenyang Number 1 Detention Centre. She has been questioned repeatedly by police officers about the allegations of torture that she raised in a documentary on the Masanjia Women's RTL camp, and about her petitioning in Beijing during the National People's Congress in February along with 20 other former Masanjia RTL inmates.

From 2006 to 2011, Liu Hua served three terms at the Masanjia Women's RTL camp as a result of her efforts to expose corruption in her home village of Zhangliangbao. Following her release, she was interviewed as part of an investigative article by the Chinese photography magazine *Lens* on the appalling conditions in the Masanjia RTL camp. The article was published on 6 April 2013, and it helped galvanize public opinion against the RTL system. Liu Hua then featured prominently in the documentary *The Women of Masanjia Labor Camp*, which was released later in the year. In the film she vividly describes how RTL camp guards beat the female detainees, used electric batons to shock their breasts, inserted the batons and poured red hot chilies into their vaginas and put them into various torture devices such as "the Death Bed" and "the Tiger's Bench".

On 28 December 2013, the government passed a resolution that abolished the Re-education Through Labor (RTL) system. Liu Hua made a valuable contribution to push for human rights improvements in China, and continues to be targeted as a result.

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

- Calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Liu Hua;
- Calling on them to not bring criminal proceedings or otherwise penalize individuals who reveal information about human rights violations and ensure that whistle-blowers are not subjected to retaliation;
- To ensure that all criminal investigations, including on corruption - which has human rights implications – follow international standards so that they are prompt, impartial, effective and that the public are informed of their conclusions.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 MAY 2014 TO:

Shenyang Detention Centre Director

Gaoli Cun

Zaohua Xiang

Yuhong Qu

Shenyang, China

Salutation: Dear Director

Secretary for the Central Commission of

Discipline Inspection

Wang Qishan

Zhongyang Jiwei

Guang An Men Nan Jie Jia 2 Hao

Xicheng Qu

Beijing, China

Salutation: Dear Secretary

And copies to:

Governor of Liaoning Province

Chen Zhenggao

Liaoning Sheng Renmin Zhengfu

Beiling Dajie 46-9 Hao

Huanggu Qu, Shenyang Shi

China

Email: lnsfmhwz@ln.gov.cn

Salutation: Dear Governor

Also send copies to:

Ambassador Cui Tiankai, Embassy of the People's Republic of China

3505 International Place NW, Washington DC 20008

Fax: 1 202 495-2138 | Email: chinaembassy_us@fmprc.gov.cn

Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 28 December 2013, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress adopted a resolution abolishing the Re-Education Through Labor (RTL) system. For nearly sixty years, the RTL system had allowed the police to lock people up for up to four years without judicial review, appeal, or any due process. RTL inmates were typically forced to work for many hours a day under harsh and unsafe conditions, for little or no pay. The living conditions in RTL were also poor, and torture of especially political prisoners commonplace. The abolition of the RTL is a welcome and important step towards protection of human rights in China.

However, initial evidence gathered by Amnesty International as reports of the closure of RTL camps started to come in suggests that the authorities are increasingly using alternative channels of arbitrary detention as well as criminal prosecutions of individuals who previously may have been sent to RTL. These include petty criminals, suspected drug users, sex workers, Falun Gong practitioners, activists and human rights defenders and petitioners. Without more fundamental changes in the policies and practices that drive arbitrary detention, the abolition of the RTL is at risk of becoming nothing but a change in the name of the system. Despite abolishing RTL, China still has other forms of punitive administrative detention in place, such as "Compulsory Isolation for Drug Rehabilitation" and "Custody and Education". These allow the authorities to detain suspected drug users and sex workers or their clients without trial or judicial overview, for up to three years (possibly followed by another three years of 'community correction') and two years respectively. Conditions in these forms of administrative (and arbitrary) detention are similar to those in RTL, including forced labor.

The documentary "The Women of Masanjia Labor Camp", directed by Du Bin, can be viewed in its entirety on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFhu0CPi6Ko>.

Name: Liu Hua (f)

Issues: Prisoner of conscience, Freedom of speech, Risk of ill-treatment/torture

UA: 79/14

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Country: China