

Amnesty International has issued a call for URGENT ACTION to help save a Falun Gong practitioner who is being persecuted for his beliefs by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Tianjin City, Beijing.

Falun Gong practitioner, Zhou Xiangyang (周向阳), is said to be close to death in prison hospital. He is on a hunger strike and urgently needs to be released on medical parole. Zhou Xiangyang has been held in the Gangbei Prison in Tianjin City, north of Beijing since 5 March 2011.

His family saw him a few days ago and say that he is in very bad physical condition and seems close to death. Some days ago prison officials called Zhou Xiangyang's family to come to the prison to see him. He asked his family for 200 RMB (around 32 US dollars) to purchase clothes. They believe this may be because he feels himself close to death and wants to be properly dressed when he dies.

Suffering 'beyond understanding'

During the visit, he told his family that the suffering inside the prison was beyond people's understanding and that he could no longer take the torment. Before this recent visit by his family, Zhou has only ever been allowed one visit, from his mother, and has been allowed no other contact with his family or his lawyer since March 2011. When his mother visited last year, Zhou Xiangyang told her that he was being tortured.

Prison authorities told the family that he began a hunger strike as soon as he was incarcerated. Zhou Xiangyang's family believes that his poor physical condition is a consequence of the combined effects of the torture over many years and hunger striking. Zhou Xiangyang had earlier spent over six years in the same prison. In May 2003 he was arrested for speaking about Falun Gong to people in public and sentenced to nine years imprisonment, of which he served six years before being released on "medical parole". In April and May 2009 he was sent twice to the hospital for emergency treatment.

Wife detained after petition

If the prison continues to refuse to release Zhou Xiangyang on medical parole, he is at risk of death. Zhou Xiangyang's wife, Li Shanshan, was detained on 29 October 2011, and her family was told she had been sentenced to two years' re-education through labour. However, the

Amnesty Says Falun Gong Man Close to Death

China Uncensored Staff

authorities refused to provide information about her whereabouts.

On 26 June she posted an open letter on overseas websites about Zhou Xiangyang's detention. In response, more than 2300 people from Zhou's hometown and vicinities signed a petition for his release organized by his family. Five people, including Zhou Xiangyang's brother and sister-in-law were taken away by security forces on 4 November, allegedly in connection with the petition.

In China, medical parole is permitted in cases where a prisoner's health is incompatible with remaining in prison and allows for a prisoner to seek health care outside the prison. Prisoners are required to return to prison when well.

Please write immediately in Chinese or your own language: Calling for the immediate release of Zhou Xiangyang on medical parole.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 MARCH 2012 TO:

Prison Warden Xu Burong Gangbei Prison, Dagangqu Banqiao Beijinqi Xi, Tianjin City, Hebei Province 300270 People's Republic of China Salutation: Dear Warden

Mayor of Tianjin Huang Xingguo Tianjinshi Renmin Zhengfu 167 Dagulu Hepingqu, Tianjin City, Hebei Province, 300040 People's Republic of China, gongkaiban@tj.gov.cn Fax: +86 22 8309 9933 (keep trying) Salutation: Dear Mayor

And copies to: Secretary of the Tianjin Municipal Party Committee Zhang Gaoli Zhonggong Tianjinshi Weiyuanhui Tianjinshi 300040 People's Republic of China

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

[Further information](#)

Falun Gong is a spiritual movement which gained large numbers of supporters in China during the 1990s. After it staged a peaceful gathering in Tiananmen Square in July 1999, the government outlawed the group and launched a long-term campaign of intimidation and persecution. Practitioners have been held in psychiatric hospitals, re-education through labour (RTL) facilities (a form of administrative detention imposed without charge, trial or judicial review), sentenced to long prison terms, and been held in specialized detention centres whose mission is to “transform” Falun Gong practitioners, a process through which they are coerced into renouncing their spiritual beliefs, often through the use of torture and ill-treatment. Falun Gong practitioners have been killed so that their organs may be sold, mainly in People's Liberation Army (PLA) hospitals. [Read report](#)

Torture and other ill-treatment are endemic in all forms of detention, despite China's ratification of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1988. Falun Gong sources have documented numerous deaths in custody of Falun Gong practitioners, believed to have been caused by torture and other ill-treatment.