

# RELEASE INTERNATIONAL 7x7 PRAYER ALERT

*Tuesday 3 April 2007*

Prayer support is crucial to those who suffer for their faith in Jesus. Please use these alerts to inform other Christians as well, and to facilitate prayer both in your church and other Christian meetings. This information can also be reproduced in church magazines and news bulletins, provided the source is acknowledged.

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**This special edition of 7x7 focuses solely on the case of Shuang Shuying, an elderly Chinese woman who has apparently been jailed just to punish her son. We urge you to join us in praying against this huge injustice and appealing to the Chinese authorities on her behalf. Together we can show them that Mrs Shuang Shuying is part of a global Christian family who are not prepared to sit back and stay silent.**

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The sick and elderly mother of a detained pastor has been thrown into jail in China – apparently to punish her son.

Seventy-five-year-old Shuang Shuying was seized by seven officers based at an Olympic Games police station in Beijing while she was out walking. She was beaten, arrested and later jailed for two years. Her son Pastor Hua Huiqi, who was arrested with her, is a human-rights activist and a prominent member of a Beijing underground church.

Police have had Pastor Hua under surveillance for years. He is well-known for helping persecuted Christians and peasants who travel to Beijing to appeal for justice from the central government. Hua has also campaigned against the demolition of unregistered house churches. The authorities have detained him for obstruction of justice – and it's believed he could face up to three years in prison.

## **Brutal assault**

The ordeal began for Hua and his mother when they were walking near a 2008 Olympics hotel site. Seven police threw them to the ground and kicked them, before taking them to the Olympic Police station for questioning.

When Hua appealed to them to let his elderly mother go, they beat him repeatedly. They poured cold water over him in the sub-zero temperatures, before taking him freezing and shivering to a detention centre. The next day the police called Hua's wife to say they had sentenced her husband to a month behind bars while enquiries continued.

Hua's elderly mother then went to a district office to ask about her son – but the authorities arrested her too. They charged her with wilfully damaging a car and a touch-screen computer with her walking stick – both charges she denies.

Shuang Shuying's trial was staged on the first working day of the Chinese New Year – so her lawyer had no time to gather evidence in her defence. The hearing was over in an hour.

## **Appalling injustice**

China Aid Association, which has been monitoring the case, says the conviction is baseless and probably comes on the orders of higher government. It says the move may be aimed at deterring the family from appealing on behalf of Hua.

The family is concerned about the health of Hua's elderly mother. She has diabetes, high blood pressure and a weak heart and is in need of daily medication. Her relatives say the police have also threatened Hua's older brother and slashed his car tyres.

Observers regard the case as a litmus test on whether China is trying sincerely to improve its human rights record ahead of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. The fact that Olympic police are said to be behind the beatings and arrests indicates China is failing that test.

The authorities have apparently changed their tactics against the underground church to appear more tolerant. Arrests are down, according to China Aid, falling from 2000 in 2005 to 600 last year.

But behind the scenes, it's the same old story for the underground church. Instead of arresting people, the authorities are interrogating them during raids and they are charging Christians with criminal offences such as running illegal businesses.

'With the Olympic Games round the corner, the world is watching China,' says Andy Dipper, Release International's Chief Executive. 'The beating and arrest of a frail old woman gives a clear and unwelcome signal to the world. If China wants to prove its human rights are improving then it must let this woman go free.'

### **Pray**

- Ask God to protect and bless Shuang Shuying and her son Hua Huiqi during their detention.
- Pray that Shuang's appeal would be successful, and her two-year sentence revoked. Pray that Hua would have a fair trial and that the charges against him are dismissed.
- Pray that the Chinese authorities would now make genuine efforts to clean up their nation's religious rights record.

### **Act**

- Write to the Chinese authorities on Shuang Shuying's behalf. Address polite letters of concern to Ms Wu Aiyong, Minister of the Ministry of Justice of the People's Republic of China, No. 10, Nan Da Jie, Chaoyangmen, Beijing City, 100020, China. Tel:+86-10-65205114. Fax:+86-10-64729863. Do not mention Release International when you write.

## **NEW VIDEO ALERT - HELP US GENERATE 'A WAVE OF PRAYER & LETTER-WRITING'**

As part of the campaign to release Shuang Shuying, RI has produced a short video alert about her, which may be downloaded free of charge from [www.releaseinternational.org/videoalert](http://www.releaseinternational.org/videoalert). Please share this video with your Christian friends, as a way of generating a 'wave' of prayer and letter-writing in support of these two dear Christian prisoners.

The video alert can be easily shared by email, and different formats allow it to be played on a computer, as well as some mobile phones and video iPods etc. By passing it to your Christian friends, you will help us raise the profile of Shuang and Hua, and, we pray, help secure their release from prison.

## **UPDATE:**

Three Islamist militants have been jailed for their part in beheading three Christian schoolgirls in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, in 2005. Hasanuddin was sentenced on March 21 to 20 years for masterminding the attack in Poso, while his co-conspirators, Lilik Purnomo and Irwanto Irano, each received 14 years. Pray that the girls' families will now be able to start rebuilding their lives. Pray too for a fourth girl, Noviana Malewa, who escaped but sustained serious injuries to her face and neck.

*Sources: Associated Press; China Aid Association; The Voice of the Martyrs Canada.*

## **PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS NEED YOU!**

Release International (RI) wants to recruit volunteers from around the UK and Ireland to represent the needs of persecuted Christians to their churches. Could you be a Church Rep? Your core role would be to receive and disseminate information, and encourage prayerful support for RI's ministry within your church. How you develop the role depends on the amount of time you have to give. Church Reps are a vital part of the RI team. Please consider prayerfully if you can join us – and pray that many others will take on this role too. To find out more, ring 01689 823491.

## **PRISONERS OF FAITH MINISTRY:**

Our Prisoners of Faith Ministry provides pastoral care and practical support for Christians imprisoned for their faith. An email alert is sent free monthly, highlighting an individual Christian prisoner, giving prayer points and addresses for letter-writing. To receive these alerts, please contact the office or sign up by visiting our web site: [www.releaseinternational.org/prisonersoffaith](http://www.releaseinternational.org/prisonersoffaith)

## **Our next Prayer Alert issue will be on Tuesday 17 April 2007.**

This prayer alert is part of Release International's 7x7 initiative to encourage prayer and action for seven years for seven countries where Christians have faced intense persecution: China, Indonesia, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Sudan and Vietnam.

Through our international network of missions, RI serves persecuted Christians in 30 countries around the world by supporting pastors and Christian prisoners, and their families; supplying Christian literature and Bibles; and working for justice. RI is a member of the UK organisations Global Connections, the Evangelical Alliance and the Micah Network.

### ***To stop receiving the prayer alerts or change address, please write to or telephone:***

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Tel: 01689 823491

General enquiries: [info@releaseinternational.org](mailto:info@releaseinternational.org)

Website address: [www.releaseinternational.org](http://www.releaseinternational.org)