

PRISONERS OF faith

Liu Huiwen Country: China

Liu Huiwen became a Christian in 1995 and is an active member of a house church in Lanzhou, the capital city of Gansu province, China. An evangelist at heart, Liu loves to share his faith and in 2004, together with his wife Miao Hui Lian, he moved to Dongxiang County in order to reach out to the predominantly Muslim peoples of the region.

Liu, 39, was arrested April 28 2007 after distributing a leaflet entitled 'A Letter To Our Muslim Friends' during a funeral in Ketuo village. Some of the villagers were incensed and threatened Liu before reporting him to the police who later arrested him while confiscating various Christian resources including 523 Bibles from premises he was renting. One source stated that police severely beat Liu before detaining him at Dongxiang police station. For the first five months, police did not allow any of his family members (including his wife) to visit him.

In September he was charged with publishing literature that 'discriminated against and insulted people of ethnic minorities'. The leaflet deemed to be offensive spoke of Jesus Christ as *'the only person in this world who overcame sin and death'* and appealed to Muslims to turn to Christ. Liu's lawyer argued the leaflet did not contain any discriminating remarks or insults against ethnic minorities and the distribution of the leaflets was a minor incident. He also asserted Liu had not overstepped the boundaries of freedom of speech outlined in Chinese law.

Judges rejected the lawyer's defence and found Liu guilty as charged, sentencing him to 18 months imprisonment. The court determined the day of Liu's arrest, April 28 2007, as the first day of his prison term, meaning he will be due for release October 27 2008. After sentencing, he was returned to prison.

Through our international network of missions, Release International 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.

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EMAIL ALERT
for prayer & action
MAY 2008



Photo – Compass Direct

Following a recent prison visit (allowed only twice a month), Liu's wife said he was limping badly and looked very thin. Liu, unable to speak openly, told his wife that the prison was 'a very bad place' and that he was being bullied constantly. When Liu's wife attempted to travel to Beijing to report the suspected abuse, police warned her to stay at home and make no complaint. She is under heavy police surveillance. Local sources state prison guards have withheld food and other items taken into the prison for Liu. *Sources: Compass Direct and China Aid.*

PLEASE PRAY

- ▶ That God will strengthen Liu and keep him safe during his time in prison
- ▶ For his wife and four-year-old son who are living with Liu's parents
- ▶ That local Chinese Christians will be supportive and bear faithful witness to the Lord Jesus Christ

'But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him'
Acts 12:5

release INTERNATIONAL
THE VOICE OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Hebrews 13:3 'Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow-prisoners, and those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering'

During a visit to China last summer RI staff met with a number of pastors who had been imprisoned in China, together with some of their families. Each one testified to the encouragement they experienced on receiving cards and letters from abroad. Arrest and imprisonment of a family member is always traumatic and painful.

Receiving a card or letter from another Christian is a huge encouragement and lets the family know they are loved and prayed for. As brothers and sisters in Christ we have the privilege and responsibility to care for those who are mistreated. Because Liu has served most of his sentence, writing to the authorities in this instance is unlikely to effect any significant change and may actually be unhelpful. Instead, please consider writing to his family assuring them of your love and prayers.

Please take time to send a card or short letter of encouragement to Liu Huiwen and his wife Miao Hui Lian.

'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.' Psalm 46:1

When writing please do not mention Release International, or advance your political opinion or include anything which could be insulting to the authorities. Do not send money

Cards or letters may be sent to the following addresses:

Miao Hui Lian (Liu Huiwen)
Room 601,
Unit 11
Building 19
Lanxing
Chaoshi,
Wulipu,
Chengguan District,
Lanzhou Municipality
People's Republic of China

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