

Four members of the Church of Almighty God arrested and tortured in Huaiyang County

HRWF (27.11.2017) - The Chinese government has conducted nationwide mass arrests of members of the Church of Almighty God on charges of "endangering the social stability" and "subverting the government". Church members claim that the government has fabricated rumors, slander, and used radio, television, the internet, and media channels to propagate derogatory reports against the group. Members report being subject to arbitrary searches of private property, secret arrests, extorted confessions through torture, and imprisonment in labour camps.

In early March 2017, the Chinese government began a new campaign titled "Door-knocking Action" for mass arrests of members of the Church of Almighty God. As a result, many have been arrested, detained and tortured.

The following four members were arrested on 28th March 2017 for having church meetings:

- Zhang Ming, age 48 from Xiangcheng City
- Tangrong, age 53 from Huaiyang County
- Huangying, age 56 from Huaiyang County
- Zhao Beibei, age 16 from Huaiyang County

The arrest and torture of four members of the Church of Almighty God in Zhoukou City: A Timeline

It is reported that at 9:00am on 28 March 2017, the four members were meeting in the village of Huaiyang County. During their meeting, three police officers from the local station arrived in a white van. Without showing any identification, they broke into the home and searched the house. They seized more than twenty books, an MP5 player and four 32GB memory cards.

Zhang Ming tried to flee but was captured and handcuffed. All four were forcibly put into the police car and brought to the local police station.

Around 11:00am, the four were transferred to the National Security Brigade of the Public Security Bureau in Huaiyang County.

Here, the police forced Zhang Ming to sit on a 'torture-rack'.

Thirty minutes later, the four were searched and interrogated separately by the police. Zhang Ming had a letter, a 32GB memory card and a 16GB memory card confiscated from his person.

At approximately 14:00 that same day, the captain of the National Security Team and another officer interrogated Zhang Ming. It is reported that they attempted to get Zhang Ming to confess to fabricated charges, which he denied. The captain and the officer then began to physically torture Zhang Ming, stomping on his toes, slapping him, and whipping him across the face with a leather belt. It is reported that the captain then threatened Zhang Ming, saying "If you do not admit [to these charges], we will let you drink 'Laohai' (heroin) and inject it into you...The stomping, slapping, and whipping continued and the officers increased their brutality to the use of electric sticks, pliers and other instruments. The torture reportedly lasted until 23:00 when the police left Zhang Ming to sit on the torture-rack throughout the night.

Around 8:00am the next day, the torture of Zhang Ming began again. The policemen apparently attempted to brainwash Zhang Ming using computer material and continued with a violent interrogation; they asked him to give details about his religious group, threatened him with grotesque acts and increased prison sentences, while beating him continuously throughout the day. Zhang Ming's requests to use the lavatories were reportedly refused by the authorities. As a result, Zhang Ming had the difficulty with movements for nearly a month due to serious injuries caused by electric sticks and beatings.

Tangrong also experienced violence during her interrogation. Authorities pulled her hair while asking her for the details of her own belief and those of Zhang Ming. When Tangrong did not answer their questions, they beat her and threatened to kill her. Tangrong was left with a swollen face and other various injuries. The authorities held Tangrong for fifteen days. When she was released, she was forced to pay 140 yuan. The police warned her that they would not hesitate to arrest her again if she continued her religious activities.

Huangying faced a similar fate. The authorities reportedly beat her with a book and hit her eyes and her head violently until she became numb when she refused to answer questions. The authorities presented names of Christian individuals to Huangying, asking her to identify them, which she also refused. Around 1:00 in the morning, they released Huangying due to her physical injuries and ailments.

On 29 March, Zhao Beibei was released to her family. The police threatened that she can be arrested again and demanded that she calls the police once a month for additional monitoring.

On 1 April, Zhang Ming was sent home. The police issued him a phone, and reportedly called him several times to question his contacts with members in the church and asked him to act as an undercover agent and supply information about the Church to the police. Zhang Ming and his family remained paranoid and scared after his release and eventually he left home to flee possible further arrest, torture, or worse.
