

Woman dies after torture during interrogation by Chinese authorities

HRWF (19.12.2018) - Xiaocao (alias) was born on November 26, 1968, and was a native of Dunhua City in Jilin Province. She joined The Church of Almighty God in July 2007, and from 2012 to March 2015, she held a position as a mid-level leader in the Church.

Around 9 p.m. on 13 September 2018, four plain-clothes officers from the Dunhua Public Security Bureau pried open the door and burst into Xiaocao's home. While yelling at her about her involvement in the Church, the police ransacked her home. Xiaocao was terrified and in complete shock; the trauma caused her to suffer a heart attack right on the spot. She was then taken to the hospital for emergency treatment.

Early the morning of 14 September, as soon as Xiaocao woke up, the police took her from the hospital to the Dunhua Public Security Bureau for questioning. Upon learning this, her husband rushed to the PSB, but the police would not allow him to see her.

At 6:20 p.m. that same day, Xiaocao's husband received a call from the Dunhua PSB telling him to go to the Dunhua City Hospital. He rushed to the hospital where he found his wife lying in a hospital bed in the ICU hooked up to oxygen; she was unable to breathe on her own and was unconscious. Her family found bruises and purple marks on her left arm. They tried to discretely take a photo for evidence but were stopped by the police. When they asked the police where the injuries on her body had come from, the police and the doctor stammered and then said they were from receiving injections. Her family did not believe their answer.

At 3 p.m. on 15 September 2018, after an unsuccessful rescue effort, Xiaocao died.

According to the medical records, when the ambulance arrived to the Public Security Bureau, Xiaocao was not breathing and did not have a pulse. The police insisted that she was not deceased, but brain dead.

When Xiaocao's family went to the Dunhua Public Security Bureau to try to get an explanation for her death, Mr. Zhang, the Bureau's deputy chief, told them:

"This is a major national arrest operation. Orders came directly from the provincial level to round up and get rid of people from The Church of Almighty God. She not only believed in Almighty God but was a leader. Nobody will be held responsible even if she was beaten to death."

The Public Security Bureau refused to take responsibility for her death in spite of her family trying twice to negotiate with them for reparations. Her husband later contacted the mayor of Dunhua, Lu Yang, to discuss the matter with him. Her husband repeatedly asked about the cause of his wife's death, but the mayor fobbed him off, saying that it was a 'normal death'. In their conversation, Mayor Lu also revealed that Xiaocao did not forfeit information about members of her Church during investigations.

Her family asked for the Public Security Bureau's surveillance footage, but they claimed that their security cameras were broken, so they were unable to provide any footage. Combined with countless testimonies, the circumstances of Xiaocao's case points to the cause of her death being torture.