

Imprisoned Chinese Underground House Church Pastor Near Death

It's a life and death struggle for an imprisoned house church leader in China.

Gong Shengliang once led an underground house church movement of more than 50,000 people called the South China Church.

In 2001, the government convicted him of rape, arson, and leading a cult.

Even though many witnesses later recanted their testimony, he remains in jail.

In a recent report in *Christianity Today*, Gong's daughter says he is near death after years of torture and neglect.

She wrote a public letter to Chinese President Xi Jinping requesting her father's release and medical treatment.

According to the report, she wrote, "(My father's) life is in grave danger. ... Accordingly, we have asked for his release on bail for urgent medical treatment. But, again and again, our petitions have been completely ignored, without any reasonable response. It is very urgent for my father to have immediate medical treatment, otherwise he will either die soon while imprisoned under false pretense or remain severely disabled for the remainder of his life."

The Bush administration intervened in his case in 2001 and was able to get his death sentence reduced to life in prison.