

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety/Fear of torture  
or ill-treatment

15 March 2002

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC  
OF CHINA (PRC)

Falun Gong practitioners in Changchun City

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Dozens of suspected members of the Falun Gong spiritual movement have reportedly been detained during a security crackdown in Changchun City, Jilin Province. Amnesty International believes they are at serious risk of torture or ill-treatment.

A major police operation was launched after a group of Falun Gong members took over a state-owned cable television company in Changchun on 5 March and broadcast pro-Falun Gong films. Local police reportedly stated on 8 March that one person had been arrested in connection with the incident and that two other suspects were being sought. Other media reports suggested that three people had been detained, but no further details have been made available.

Since then, police "stop-and-search" checkpoints have reportedly been established across the city and dozens of alleged Falun Gong practitioners have been detained.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been arbitrarily detained in China since the spiritual movement was banned as a "threat to social and political stability" in July 1999. Some have been charged with crimes and sentenced after unfair trials, while others have been sent to labour camps without trial. Many of them are reported to have been tortured or ill-treated in detention.

Falun Gong sources have claimed that a special government taskforce, the "610 office", established to lead the campaign against the Falun Gong, issued unwritten instructions in 2001 allowing the police and other officials to go beyond legal restraints in the campaign, discharging them of responsibility if a Falun Gong member dies in detention due to beatings. Over 350 Falun Gong practitioners are reported to have died in custody since the 1999 ban.

The programmes broadcast while the Changchun TV station was in the hands of Falun Gong members included footage of the US-based Falun Gong spiritual leader, Li Hongzhi, who was born in Changchun. They also included a film accusing the government of staging the incident in Tiananmen Square last year when alleged Falun Gong members set themselves on fire. Footage of the incident has been broadcast widely in China in an apparent attempt to turn public opinion against the group.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Chinese, English or your own language:**

- urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of all those detained in connection with the takeover of the Changchun TV station and during the ensuing police operation, and to clarify their names and whereabouts;
- urging the authorities to ensure that all those detained have immediate access to lawyers, their families and medical attention;

- calling on the authorities to release immediately and unconditionally all Falun Gong members detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their fundamental human rights;
- expressing your concern at repeated reports that Falun Gong members have suffered torture and other serious human rights violations, and calling on the authorities to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

Premier of the People's Republic of China

ZHU Rongji Zongli

Guowuyuan

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People's Republic of China

**Faxes:** +86 10 6 520 6722 (c/o Ministry of Justice)

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**Telex:** 210070 FMPRC CN or 22478 MFERT CN

**Telegram:** Premier Zhu Rongji, Beijing, China

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Director of the Jilin Provincial Department of Public Security

ZHAO YONGJI Tingzhang

Jilin Gong'anting

42 Xinfalu

Changchunshi 130051

Jilinsheng

People's Republic of China

**Telegram:** Director, Provincial Public Security Department, Changchun,

Jilin, China

**Salutation:** Dear Director

Governor of the Jilin Provincial People's Government

HONG Hu Shengzhang

Jilinsheng Renmin Zhengfu

11 Xinfalu

Changchunshi 130051

Jilinsheng

People's Republic of China

**Telegram:** Governor, Changchun, Jilin Province, China

**Salutation:** Dear Governor

**COPIES TO:**

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and to diplomatic representatives of the People's Republic of China accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 April 2002.