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**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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Open Letter by Amnesty International: Justice through Accountability, 20th Anniversary of the Tiananmen Crackdown

Dear Chairman,

Twenty years ago, the Chinese Government ordered a military crackdown on peaceful protestors in and around Tiananmen Square on 3-4 June, which resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries. While the Chinese government has made many advances since then, particularly in the area of economic, social and cultural rights, grave violations of human rights as occurred in June 1989 cannot go unanswered and should be addressed if China is to match the commitments to human rights it made in the recently unveiled National Human Rights Action Plan.

I am writing to urge the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress to initiate an open and independent inquiry into the events of June 1989. Continuing to silence domestic voices calling for accountability is not in the interests of a harmonious society nor in accordance with the stated goals of the Action Plan of the Chinese government.

The National People's Congress has within its powers the ability to lead the way in calling for an accounting of all those who died, those who were imprisoned and those who remain in prison still. Those who remain in prison, many under charges of 'counter revolutionary' crimes that were removed from the Chinese Criminal Code in 1997, should be immediately released as a first step toward accountability.

The ongoing persecution of human rights defenders and activists who are demanding accountability must also cease. These include Zhang Shijun, a former soldier who participated in the 1989 military crackdown and who openly urged the authorities to reassess the pro-democracy protests. Similarly, the Tiananmen Mothers have been denied the right to freely and publicly mourn and commemorate the victims, except for one occasion when some members of the Tiananmen Mothers were allowed, under police surveillance, to conduct a short memorial ceremony on Chang'an Avenue in Beijing, in May 2007. The promises made to protect human rights must be met with consistent implementation in practice.

I urge you to take the 20th anniversary of the crackdown on the pro-democracy protests as an opportunity to address these calls for justice. The initiation of an open and independent inquiry into the events will also serve as an important step toward realizing the National Human Rights Action Plan. I welcome the release of the Action Plan, but the ultimate test will be in its full implementation. By practising consistent policies on the advancement of human rights, the Chinese government will reaffirm its commitment to the Plan's goals and play an increasingly important role in promoting and protecting human rights around the globe.

Yours sincerely,

Irene Khan
Secretary General