

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Solitary Confinement/Health Concern

26 July 1991

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: Chen Ziming
 Wang Juntao
 Ren Wandong
 Bao Zunxin
 Liu Gang
 Wang Dan

Amnesty International has received news this week that several key activists in the 1989 pro-democracy movement, are reported to have been held for the past three months in solitary confinement in conditions which could lead to a serious deterioration of their physical and mental health. They are Chen Ziming, Wang Juntao, Ren Wandong, Bao Zunxin, Liu Gang and Wang Dan, who were sentenced earlier this year to prison terms ranging from four to 13 years.

The six prisoners were transferred in April 1991 from Qincheng prison, north of Beijing, to Beijing's Prison No.2 where they were placed in isolation cells. They are reportedly held under a strict regime which is usually imposed as a punishment and is not the norm for convicted prisoners. This involves constant confinement in small isolation cells measuring four square metres, except for a brief walk once a week, reduced food rations, denial of access to radio, tapes, books and other reading material except for one official newspaper, and denial of contact with other prisoners. Medical care and hygiene conditions are also reported to be inadequate and the quality of food to be poor.

Recent reports indicate that Chen Ziming's health has deteriorated under these conditions: he is suffering from serious skin disease and malnutrition. Another detainee, Wang Juntao, has been suffering from hepatitis since February 1991. His family has repeatedly appealed to the authorities for him to be transferred to hospital, but according to reports, he had still not been moved at the end of June, or given medical treatment. The state of health of the other prisoners is not known, but it is feared that their health may also deteriorate due to these conditions of imprisonment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Conditions of detention are reported to be poor in many places of detention in China, though convicted prisoners usually have a better regime than detainees awaiting trial. In detention centres, lack of hygiene and medical care, insufficient and poor quality food, and continuous confinement in overcrowded cells are reportedly common. Amnesty International has received many reports of detainees being ill with scabies, hepatitis, intestinal and pulmonary diseases due to such conditions.

Amnesty International is also concerned that prolonged confinement in isolation cells can lead to deterioration of prisoners' physical and mental health. The conditions in which the prisoners named above are held appear to be a punishment for which there is no justification. Such conditions also contravene the provisions of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/faxes and airmail letters:

- urging the authorities to investigate without delay the conditions in which Chen Ziming, Wang Juntao, Ren Wandong, Bao Zunxin, Liu Gang and Wang Dan are held in Beijing Prison No.2 and to ensure that they are not being treated in a manner contrary to international standards;
- urging that Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao be immediately granted adequate medical treatment by fully-qualified competent doctors, or that they be released to seek medical treatment at home;
- expressing concern that the prisoners are jailed for the peaceful exercise of basic human rights and urging the authorities to release them unconditionally.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice:

CAI Cheng Buzhang

[Salutation: Your Excellency]

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Beijingshi

People's Republic of China

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

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 September 1991.