
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 166/93

TO: PRESS OFFICERS
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE
DATE: 9 DECEMBER 1993

AI INDEX: NWS 11/166/93
DISTR: SC/PO
NO OF WORDS: 486

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - CHINA

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

PLEASE NOTE: The France RAN office has moved to EFAL. Their new numbers are Tel: +44 59 29 96, Fax: +44 59 29 94.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

India - 15 December - PLEASE SEE NEWS SERVICE 159

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

South Africa - 9 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 165

Human Rights Day Speech - 9 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 162

Bahrain - 16 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 163/164

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES 1994

Children - 7 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161

Tunisia - 12 January

USA death penalty - 26 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161

South Africa - 16 February SEE NEWS SERVICE 159

Women - 8 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161

Colombia - 16 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56+57/93

*

News Service 166/93

AI INDEX: ASA 17/WU 17/93
9 DECEMBER 1993

CHINA: APPEAL FOR RELEASE OF FOUR DISSIDENTS RECENTLY DETAINED IN BEIJING

Amnesty International is calling on the Chinese authorities to release four dissidents detained by police in Beijing and held incommunicado without charge during the past month. Their families have not been officially informed of the reason for their detention or where they are held.

Qin Yongmin, a 40-year-old former steel worker from Wuhan, in central China, and Yang Zhou, a 50 year-old democracy and human rights campaigner from Shanghai, were detained by police in Beijing on 14 November. Their arrest came shortly after they publicly issued a "Peace Charter" calling on the Chinese Communist Party to respect human rights and introduce political reforms. Seven other people who had signed a statement endorsing the core ideas of the Peace Charter were also detained for questioning by police, but were released after a few hours.

Both Qin Yongmin and Yang Zhou have been active in promoting democratic changes and human rights improvements in China since the late 1970s and they both spent several years in jail during the 1980s as a result of these activities. Since mid-1993, Qin Yongmin has also been detained for short periods on several occasions for publicly expressing his opposition to Beijing's bid for the 2000 Olympics Games.

Two other dissidents, Zheng Xuguang and Ma Shaohua, from the central city of Xi'an, were detained by police in Beijing on 27 and 29 November and have not been heard of since. Earlier in November, the two men had launched a campaign in Xi'an calling for human rights improvements. They later went to Beijing to hold discussions with members of the "Peace Charter" group and were arrested shortly after they publicly announced that the two groups had decided to coordinate their efforts. Both were student leaders during the 1989 pro-democracy protests and had spent between 18 months and two years in prison following the June 1989 crackdown. The authorities have not disclosed any information about their detention or legal status.

Amnesty International believes that the four men are being detained for the peaceful exercise of their fundamental human rights and calls on the Chinese authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally, in accordance with international human rights standards.

ENDS/