

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **China Olympics: Amnesty International's appeal to IOC Executive Board meeting**

Ahead of the forthcoming International Olympic Committee Executive Board meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland (10-12 Dec), Amnesty International urges the IOC to ensure that

human rights concerns are addressed in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics.

While human rights reforms are the primary responsibility of the Chinese authorities Amnesty International believes that the IOC can still make a significant contribution by using its influence to bring about positive change in line with the Olympics Charter.

In the lead up to the Beijing Olympics, Amnesty International is campaigning for progress on four human rights issues which would be a major positive legacy for the Games. Specifically, progress on the death penalty, detention without trial, freedom of expression and the protection of human rights activists, would contribute to such a legacy.

A number of recent cases underscore the urgent need for action on the human rights situation in China in the lead up to the Games. These include:

- o On 10 October Wang Ling was assigned to 15 months 'Re-education Through Labour' for signing petitions and preparing banners in protest against the demolition of her property for Olympic construction projects. Beaten, detained and imprisoned on numerous occasions, Wang Ling is currently being held at Daxing Re-education Through Labour Facility in Beijing.
- o Yang Chunlin: detained and reportedly tortured for his involvement in a petition "We Want Human Rights, not the Olympics" signed by farmers protesting against the confiscation of their land. Since his detention in July Yang Chunlin has reportedly on numerous occasions had his arms and legs stretched and chained to the four corners of an iron bed and then left to eat, drink and defecate in that position. He is still in detention.
- o Housing rights activist, Ye Guozhu, serving a four year sentence after he applied for permission to hold a demonstration about forced evictions in Beijing. His home and business were demolished as a result of Olympics-related construction and his family received no compensation. He has reportedly been tortured in prison. Ye Mingjun and Ye Guoqiang, son and brother of Ye Guozhu, were detained by Beijing police on suspicion of "inciting subversion" at the end of September 2007 because they had protested against forced evictions reportedly carried out to clear space for construction for the Beijing Olympics. At the end of October Ye Mingjun was released on bail and now awaits trial. Ye Guoqiang is still in detention.

These detainees must be released immediately and unconditionally. The reports of torture must be investigated and measures taken against anyone found responsible. Those abused must receive reparation.

#### Background

Re-education through Labour is a form of detention imposed without charge or trial for up to four years, often carried out in harsh conditions, and used against people deemed by the Chinese police to have committed offences not serious enough to be punished under the Criminal Law. It is frequently used against petty criminals, critics of the government or followers of banned beliefs. As a first step towards fair trials, the Chinese government must renounce the extension and use of Re-education Through Labour proposed to "clean up" Beijing ahead of the Olympics.

Forced evictions: Forced eviction has become an issue nationwide in China, but is also closely linked with preparation for the Olympics. In many areas of Beijing, families are engaged in disputes with the Chinese authorities over land seizures and inadequate compensation for their property. Many have reportedly been evicted without due process and without adequate compensation. Forced evictions – those carried out without appropriate legal protection – are a violation of human rights including the right to adequate housing, set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which China is a State party.

Freedom of Expression: With around 30 journalists and 50 internet users known to be behind bars, media freedom organizations have branded China "the world's leading jailer of journalists". "Complete media freedom" as promised by the Beijing Olympics Bid Committee, must mean equal opportunities for both foreign and domestic journalists to cover issues of legitimate public inquiry without discrimination and in line with fundamental human rights to freedom of expression and information.

Human Rights Defenders: Human rights activists, including defence lawyers, journalists, HIV/AIDS activists, workers' rights activists, villagers protesting against land seizures, and relatives of people killed or disabled during the crackdown on the 1989 pro-democracy movement, continue to be systematically repressed in China. This repression significantly increases in the lead-up to and during important public events. This was most recently demonstrated in the run up to the 17th Chinese Communist Party National Congress in October 2007 in what Chinese human rights activists described as the worst wave of repression in years. There are concerns that the Chinese authorities will employ similar tactics increasingly as the Beijing Olympics get closer to ensure the "smooth running" of the Games and to showcase a "harmonious" and "stable" society to the world. As a first step, China must cease arbitrary detention, intimidation or harassment of activists and human rights defenders, and release those currently imprisoned. It must review and reform articles of the Criminal Law and the Criminal Procedure Law.

Death Penalty: China executes more people each year than the rest of the world combined. As a first step towards abolishing the death penalty, China must make public the actual numbers of people executed and radically cut the number of capital offences.