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China: Amnesty International meets with Chinese officials

In Oslo today, Amnesty International met for the first time with a delegation from a Chinese human rights organization, the China Society for Human Rights Studies, to discuss the possibilities for a dialogue on human rights issues.

Three staff members of the International Secretariat of Amnesty International attended the meeting, as well as the Director of the Norwegian Section of Amnesty International. The Chinese delegation was headed by Zhu Muzhi, the current President of the Society and a former Minister of Culture, and included an adviser from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Amnesty International welcomed the meeting: "We hope this significant meeting will be the first step in holding serious discussions with China about reform in the country on human rights issues," said Rory Mungoven, Director of the Asia-Pacific Program. "We have agreed that we should meet again in the near future."

During the meeting Amnesty International raised its concerns about areas in which Chinese law and practice fall short of its international human rights obligations, including relating to fair trials of political prisoners and continuing patterns of torture and ill-treatment.

The talks are part of the wide range of Amnesty International's work on China: "We welcome contact with Chinese organizations, academics and officials. We hope this will contribute in practical ways to debate in China on changes of law and practice on human rights issues. We will of course continue to research and publicly document our human rights concerns in the country."

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