

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Tiananmen, 28 years on, government suppression continues**

On the night of 3-4 June 1989, troops from the People's Liberation Army entered Beijing to put an end to weeks of peaceful protests and occupation of Tiananmen Square by students to demand political reforms, killing hundreds, if not thousands, of unarmed protestors.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of these events, Amnesty International reiterates its call for a thorough inquiry into the 1989 military crackdown, and for the government to fully uphold the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

Amnesty International continues to call on the Chinese government to:

- launch an open and independent inquiry into the 1989 military crackdown and hold those responsible for human rights violations accountable;
- publicly acknowledge the human rights violations which occurred and provide an accounting of all those killed and injured during the military crackdown;
- provide appropriate compensation to victims of the crackdown on the 1989 pro-democracy protests, and their families, and;
- cease harassment and prosecution of individuals and immediately release all those detained for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly including those seeking reassessment of the 1989 Tiananmen protests and commemorating its victims.

The Chinese government thus far has never accepted responsibility for the human rights violations that took place during the military crackdown or held any perpetrator legally accountable. Moreover the authorities continue to systematically censor any reference to the military suppression and to harass, suppress or prosecute individuals who commemorate the victims of the Tiananmen crackdown:

In March 2017, activist **Chen Yunfei**, who was first detained in May of 2015 after he visited the grave of a victim of the 1989 government crackdown was convicted of the crime of “picking quarrels and provoking troubles” and sentenced to four years. Chen took part in the pro-democracy protests in 1989, and had previously been placed under “residential surveillance” in 2007 after he placed a newspaper advertisement in a local newspaper that commemorated Tiananmen victims.

In March 2017, four friends – **Fu Hailu, Chen Bing, Zhang Junyong** and **Luo Fuyu** – were formally indicted for “inciting subversion of state power” for discussing the production of a label for “baijiu” (a Chinese alcohol) commemorating the Tiananmen crackdown. According to the indictment recently released by their lawyers, the activists used the labels and the “commemoration wine” (*jinian-jiu*) to “promote the June 4th incident on the internet”.

**Liu Shaoming**, a labour rights activist and democracy advocate who was detained in May 2015 after he published an online essay reflecting on his participation in the pro-democracy movement in Tiananmen Square, is still awaiting sentencing on the charge of “inciting subversion” even though his trial concluded on 15 April 2016.

On 24 April, **Xu Jue**, one of the key members of the Tiananmen Mothers, an advocacy group of parents whose children were killed on 3-4 June 1989, succumbed to cancer after an eight-year battle. Her son, Wu Xiangdong, had left their house at 8pm on the night of 3 June, never to return home. He was killed on Chang’an Jie, “The Avenue of Eternal Peace”, by bullets fired by People’s Liberation Army soldiers. Xu Jue fought for justice and truth for her son, despite facing increasing surveillance and intimidation from the authorities.

Ding Zilin, one of the founders of the Tiananmen Mothers, could not attend Xu Jue’s funeral due to illness, but she wrote this heartfelt letter as a farewell to her friend:

“Xu Jue, my dear sister!

I used all my force, but I couldn’t stop you from taking the last steps in your life, and all I can do is pray that you go with ease, and that you go in peace!

Xu Jue, my dear sister!

You have iron will that ordinary people can only strive for, and you fought with all your might to persist until even the last moment, marking a beautiful ‘full stop’ to the end of your life.

I will always remember you, my dear sister!

I will exhaust all my efforts in seeing that your last wish – not yet fulfilled – is finally realized.”

Answering the Tiananmen Mothers’ calls for an investigation into the Tiananmen crackdown, accountability and compensation are now more urgent than ever.

It is time for the political leadership to stop obstructing the families of the victims of the Tiananmen crackdown, and finally help them fulfil their wish for justice.