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Legal Concern

25 January 1991

PEOPLE`S REPUBLIC OF CHINA : CHEN Xiaoping  
LIU Gang

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Reports from Beijing indicate that Chen Xiaoping and Liu Gang will be formally charged with "attempting to overthrow the government" - a potentially capital offence. So far, of the students and intellectuals who have been charged or sent for trial in Beijing, only "black hands" Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao face similar charges as instigators of the 1989 pro-democracy protests (see UA 485/90, ASA 17/71/90, 30 November 1990).

Chen Xiaoping, a 29-year-old constitutional law specialist at Beijing`s University of Politics and Law, has been detained since June 1989. He is reported to have turned himself in to the authorities shortly after the 4 June military crackdown in Beijing. As a Beijing University law undergraduate Chen had taken part in earlier student protests, writing a wall-poster critical of the ineffectual guarantees for freedom of expression and assembly contained in the 1982 Chinese constitution. He is believed to have been close to Wang Juntao during the 1989 protests, and to have contributed to the Economics Weekly which Wang edited.

Beijing University physics postgraduate Liu Gang, aged 29, was arrested on 19 June 1989 in Baoding, Hebei Province. The following day he was taken to Beijing under police escort. One of 21 "most wanted" student leaders sought by the authorities, Liu had been a prominent member of the Beijing Students` Autonomous Federation. On 25 July 1989 the Beijing Daily accused him of helping to organize a "democracy salon", the first meeting of which took place at Beijing University on 4 May. The newspaper alleged that proceedings at the "salon" were evidence of an attempt "to overthrow the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist system".

It is not yet known whether Chen Xiaoping and Liu Gang will be tried together with with Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao. The severity of the accusations against all four indicates that the authorities are now moving to deal with the major figures behind the officially-designated "counter-revolutionary rebellion" of 1989. Amnesty International is concerned that the four, all of whom are regarded as prisoners of conscience, may be denied fair trials in accordance with international standards.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/faxes/airmail letters:**

- expressing concern that Chen Xiaoping and Liu Gang are being held for the peaceful exercise of fundamental human rights and urging the authorities to review their cases and release them immediately and unconditionally;
- urging the authorities to make public the trial proceedings against Chen Xiaoping and Liu Gang and the evidence on which the charges against them are based;
- also urging the authorities to ensure that the trials of Chen Xiaoping and Liu Gang are open to the general public, that they are conducted in accordance with international standards for fairness, and that international observers be allowed to attend the trials.

**APPEALS TO:**

**LI Peng** Zongli (Prime Minister)  
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**Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN**

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**(Please forward to Cai Cheng Buzhang)**

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and to diplomatic representatives of the PRC in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 March 1991.