

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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EXTRA 07/92 Legal Concern

29 January 1992

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA:

Qi Lin

According to unofficial sources, Qi Lin, a journalist detained in Beijing since July 1991, is to go on trial at the Beijing Intermediate People's Court on 30 January 1992. The exact charges against him are not known, but it is reported that he may be accused of "leaking information to foreigners" and that he will be tried behind closed doors. He has been held incommunicado since his arrest in July 1991 and it is feared that he may be in poor health.

Before the 4 June 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protesters, Qi Lin was assistant foreign editor of the official newspaper Beijing Ribao (Beijing Daily). During the 1989 student-led protests, he was among journalists who took part in demonstrations in support of the students occupying Tiananmen Square. He also covered the student movement for his newspaper. Following the 4 June crackdown, he was suspended from his job at the Beijing Ribao. He was later disqualified as a journalist and put on probation as a party member pending further investigation, though he reportedly continued privately to document events linked with the 1989 pro-democracy movement.

Qi Lin was arrested at his home on 11 July 1991 by officers of the Beijing Public Security Bureau. At the time of his arrest he was reportedly hurt in circumstances which are not known to Amnesty International and is said to have lost a substantial amount of blood as a result. It is feared that his health may have deteriorated in detention as he is an insulin-dependent diabetic. His family has been denied access to him since his arrest and his place of detention is not known. He was formally "arrested" on 23 July 1991 but the charges against him were not publicly announced. According to unofficial sources he may have been charged with "leaking information to foreigners" in connection with his efforts to document the 1989 events. He is likely to be charged under a section of the Chinese Criminal Law which deals with "counter-revolutionary" offences and could face a heavy sentence.

Amnesty International is concerned that Qi Lin is reported to be held solely for peacefully exercising fundamental human rights and that he may be tried secretly under procedures which fall far short of international standards for fairness.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes and faxes:

- expressing concern at reports that Qi Lin is being held for the peaceful exercise of fundamental human rights, that he is due to go on trial in Beijing on 30 January 1992 and that the trial may be closed to the public;

- urging the authorities to ensure that he receives a fair and open trial, with full rights to defence applying, in accordance with international standards for fairness, including by making public information about the charges against him and the evidence on which they are based, as well as the procedures followed at the trial;

- urging that if he is held solely for the peaceful exercise of fundamental human rights, he be released immediately and unconditionally.

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APPEALS TO

1) Minister of Justice:

CAI Cheng Buzhang

Sifabu

Xiaguangli

Beijingshi 100016

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN

(Please forward to CAI Cheng Buzhang)

Faxes: + 86 1 408 1046

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Mayor of Beijing Municipality:

CHEN Xitong Shizhang

Beijingshi Renmin Zhengfu

2 Zhengyilu

Donhengqu

Beijingshi 100744

People's Republic of China

Faxes: + 86 1 512 1158

Telexes: 210217 FAOGB CN or 22476 BJVVT CN

(Please forward to CHEN Xitong Shizhang)

Salutation: Dear Sir

3) Chief Procurator of Beijing Municipality:

HE Fangba Jianchazhang

Beijingshi Renmin Jianchayuan

Beijingshi

People's Republic of China

Faxes: + 86 1 512 1158

Telexes: 210217 FAOGB CN or 22476 BJVVT CN

(Please forward to HE Fangba Jianchazhang)

Salutation: Dear Procurator

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of the People's Republic of China in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 February 1992.