

BACKGROUND

The failure of the authorities to address the military crackdown on the peaceful protests of 1989, which resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries, continues to tarnish China's human rights record and the image of Beijing on the international stage.

Global experience shows that long-term stability is best ensured by addressing injustices of the past, thereby strengthening the rule of the law and the principle that no one is above the law.

The Chinese government continues to stifle public debate over the issue, which remains erased from magazines, newspapers, school text-books and internet sites in China.

Over the last year in particular, official policies on media control and censorship have been intensified, preventing any public analysis or discussion of 3-4 June 1989 or other politically sensitive periods in China's recent history.



ACT NOW

Please use your voice and send polite letters to Hu Jintao, President of the People's Republic of China, urging him to ensure the Tiananmen Mothers can carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals, in line with their human rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

■ Welcome the fact that some members of the Tiananmen Mothers were allowed to grieve their loved ones in public and organize an informal seminar in June 2007, but urge the authorities to broaden this approach by allowing full public debate of the events of 3-4 June 1989.

■ Call for the immediate and unconditional release of those still imprisoned in connection with the 1989 protests, and for a full and impartial inquiry into the events on 3-4 June 1989, with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice and providing compensation to the victims or their families.

WRITE TO:

President of the People's Republic of China
HU Jintao Guojia Zhuxi
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie
Xichengqu
Beijingshi 100017
People's Republic of China

Salutation: Your Excellency

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TIANANMEN MOTHERS

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TIANANMEN MOTHERS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The Tiananmen Mothers (天安门母亲), founded by Ding Zilin, a retired university professor, is a group of around 130 human rights defenders – mainly women – whose children and other close relatives were killed or injured during the military crackdown on the 1989 pro-democracy movement. While the authorities have moved away from branding the events of 1989 as a “counter-revolutionary rebellion” towards labelling it a “political incident”, they have refused to respond to long-standing calls for justice by the victims or their families.

The Tiananmen Mothers have compiled a list of names of more than 180 people who were killed in the military crackdown and at least 70 who were injured. They regularly submit appeals and petitions calling on the Chinese authorities to allow victims’ families the right to mourn in public, to allow them to accept humanitarian aid from organizations and individuals, to end persecution of victims and their families, to release all those still imprisoned for taking part in peaceful protests, and to implement a full and open inquiry into events of 3-4 June 1989. Subsequently they have been subjected to harassment, discrimination and arbitrary detention.

Around every anniversary of the 1989 crackdown, many activists and human rights defenders, including the Tiananmen Mothers, have been placed under tight police surveillance, including forms of house arrest. However, there are signs that such controls have been relaxed. In June 2007, Ding Zilin, her husband, and two other members of victims’ families were reportedly allowed to light candles in front of pictures of their children in a short memorial ceremony on Chang’an Avenue, west of Tiananmen Square, at the spot where Ding Zilin’s 17-year-old son was believed to have been shot dead by soldiers.

Other members of the Tiananmen Mothers were able to continue their annual tradition of mourning children at Beijing Wan’an cemetery, where there appeared to be less surveillance than in previous years. Prior to this 18th anniversary, around 20 members of the Tiananmen Mothers were able to hold an informal seminar in Beijing to discuss their concerns. This was apparently the first time they had been allowed to organize such a meeting.

Amnesty International welcomes these developments but urges the authorities to broaden this and allow full public debate about the events on 3-4 June 1989. This is an important step towards securing justice



for the victims of the crackdown and their families. Amnesty International also calls on the Chinese authorities to release those imprisoned in connection with the 1989 protests, to carry out a full, independent and impartial investigation into the crackdown with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice and to compensate the victims or their families.

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