

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **China: Accountability for victims of the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations**

As the 14th anniversary of the crackdown on the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations approaches, Amnesty International again calls on the Chinese authorities to account for all those killed and injured in the 1989 crackdown and to offer compensation to the families.

"Ignoring victims of human rights violations, repressing and imprisoning their messengers, and continuing impunity for violators brings no resolution, discredits the government and potentially exacerbates tensions for the future," Amnesty International said.

An official government spokesperson has indicated that the Chinese authorities' "conclusion will remain unchanged... Stability has always remained the top priority for China." Amnesty International believes that long-term stability is best achieved by protecting human rights and addressing legitimate grievances.

Those who lost their lives or were imprisoned in 1989 were calling for transparent and accountable government and an end to corruption -- core building blocks for genuine stability and development. The new Chinese leadership has recently given prominence to these watchwords with its efforts to combat the spread of SARs.

"Transparency and accountability must extend beyond the immediate needs of public health to other areas of government policy," Amnesty International said.

Increasingly, official spokespersons have reiterated that "China is a country ruled by law". The majority of 1989 protestors were peacefully exercising basic human rights enshrined in China's constitution, the country's fundamental law, which president Hu Jintao has emphasized is of "supreme authority" and must be "carried out to the letter".

Amnesty International continues to support the Tiananmen Mothers, a group of victims and families of those killed in the crackdown, in their long struggle to document cases, and to seek redress and compensation. This year, the Tiananmen Mothers revealed the names of 12 more protestors who "disappeared" during the 1989 crackdown and remain unaccounted for.

Internet entrepreneur Huang Qi's website assisted in the search for such missing persons, and included a discussion forum for voicing grievances over related official abuses of power. He was arrested on 3 June 2000. On 9 May 2003, his sentence of 5 years imprisonment for "inciting subversion of state

power" was announced following trial proceedings which failed to meet China's own criminal procedures or international fair trial standards.

Amnesty International reiterates its appeal to the Chinese authorities to release all prisoners still held in connection with the 1989 pro-democracy protests. The organization has records of 82 people that it believes are still imprisoned following swift and unfair trials. Cases continue to come to light, indicating that the true figure is likely much higher.

## **Background**

As thousands worldwide prepare to commemorate the events of 1989 and call for justice for the victims, every year more people who attempt to do the same in China are detained. Zhao Changqing was detained in November 2002 following his involvement in an open petition addressed to the 16th Party Congress calling for a reassessment of the 1989 democratic movement and other reforms. He has now been charged with "inciting subversion of state power". Wang Jinbo was sentenced in December 2002 to four year's imprisonment for the same offence. He had posted articles on the Internet including an appeal to the government to overturn its "counter-revolutionary" verdict of the 1989 protests. Fellow prisoners have reportedly subjected him to repeated beatings. Prison authorities have failed to act against the perpetrators or ensure his safety and have not permitted visits by his family. Meanwhile, Wang Wanxing enters his eleventh year of incarceration at Ankang Psychiatric Hospital in Beijing following his 1992 attempt to unfurl a banner in Tiananmen Square commemorating the demonstrations.

## Public Document

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