

China - 11 appeal cases leaflets for archives

Leaflet 1:

Title:

CHINA

NO ONE IS SAFE

Chen Lantao

Illustration:

©Lin Muchen

‘Counter-revolutionaries’

The Chinese authorities claim that there are no political prisoners in China. This is playing with words. There are thousands of political prisoners in China, many of them prisoners of conscience.

The Constitution itself states that “counter-revolutionary” activities are to be suppressed and the Criminal Law sets out punishments for 12 different “counter-revolutionary” offences. Many prisoners of conscience have been jailed for “organizing, leading or taking part in a counter-revolutionary group”, that is any opposition group, or under a provision banning “counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement”, that is any dissenting views.

According to a Ministry of Justice official, there were 2,678 prisoners convicted of “counter-revolutionary” offences in Chinese jails in January 1995. Whether or not this figure was accurate, it excludes the thousands of political prisoners convicted of other offences or held in various forms of detention without trial.

Sixteen years behind bars

When Chen Lantao was arrested, his wife was pregnant. He was in prison when she gave birth to their son. By the time Chen Lantao has served his prison sentence, his son will be a teenager. Chen Lantao, a prisoner of conscience, is serving a 16-year sentence for his activities in the 1989 pro-democracy movement, one of the longest prison sentences imposed. He was arrested together with his wife, Sun Lijuan, on 12 June 1989. Eight days earlier, Chinese troops had massacred at least 1,000 pro-democracy demonstrators in Beijing.

Chen Lantao, now aged 32, had taken part in peaceful demonstrations in Qingdao, Shandong province, where he worked as a marine biologist. As news spread of the Beijing massacre, he was one of those who took to the streets to protest. On 8 June he gave a speech in which he reportedly criticized the government and called for greater democracy.

Sun Lijuan was released after 53 days, but Chen Lantao was formally charged with “counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement” and “disturbing public order and traffic”. He was also accused of having listened to the radio station, Voice of America.

In 1994 the United Nations (UN) Working Group on Arbitrary Detention raised Chen Lantao’s case with the Chinese Government. The government replied that he had been tried for inciting mobs to disrupt traffic and fomenting disorder. It specifically denied that his conviction had anything to do with listening to Voice of America.

However, the UN Working Group concluded that the conviction of Chen Lantao was based solely on the ground that he listened to Voice of America, distributed leaflets, met student leaders and called for student strikes. Such activities should have been regarded as the legitimate exercise of Chen Lantao’s right to free speech and assem

bly, rights guaranteed under the Chinese Constitution and international law. Instead, Chen Lantao is serving his 16-year sentence in Shandong Provincial Prison No. 3, in Weifang county.

Caption:

Chen Lantao with his wife and baby son. This is not a photograph, but a photomontage created by a family friend. Chen Lantao was in prison when his son was born and will remain there until his son is 16 years old.

ABUSE OF POWER

Victims of human rights violations in China are numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Torture is endemic. So is ill-treatment. Thousands of political prisoners are in jail, after trials at which the verdict was decided in advance. Countless numbers of people are held in administrative detention without being charged. Each year thousands of people are sentenced to death. In 1994 Amnesty International recorded three times as many executions in China as in the rest of the world put together.

No one is safe in China. Repressive legislation and the widespread abuse of power mean that everyone — not just political dissidents — is at risk. Some violations are committed with the full backing of the law; others, such as torture, continue in breach of the law.

China has undergone an economic revolution in recent times. This has significantly improved the quality of life for many people. However, economic reforms have not been matched by reform of a legal system that fosters gross human rights violations.

Dissent and any activity perceived as a threat are repressed. Independent human rights organizations in China are suppressed. International human rights organizations are not permitted to investigate abuses in China.

China's leaders stress the need to expand international cooperation as a step towards solving the world's problems. Such cooperation must be extended to human rights issues. China was one of the governments which adopted, by consensus, the Vienna Declaration of the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights. The Declaration reaffirms that "the promotion and protection of all human rights is a legitimate concern of the international community". The world cannot ignore a fifth of its population just because they happen to live within China's borders.

The case of Chen Lantao, described in this leaflet, illustrates the human rights violations suffered by thousands like him. Taking action on behalf of Chen Lantao is a step towards ending human rights violations in China. Write to the address on the left and ask for his immediate and unconditional release.

Join Amnesty International today.

Send your letters to: Li Chunting Shengzhang, (Governor of the Shandong Provincial People's Government), Shandongsheng Renmin Zhengfu, 1 Shengfu qianjie, Jinanshi, Shandongsheng, People's Republic of China.

For more information, contact Amnesty International in your country or write to: Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom. AI Index: ASA/17/86/95

Leaflet 2

Title:

CHINA

NO ONE IS SAFE

Gao Yu

Illustration:

©Lin Muchen

‘Verdict first, trial second’

Political trials in China are often grossly unfair. A facade of legality is used to obscure the interference of the political and other authorities in the outcome of trials.

In political trials the verdict is usually decided in advance, outside of the trial court. This is known as “verdict first, trial second”. Verdicts and sentences are often determined by committees heavily influenced by the political authorities.

Even where there is no direct political interference, trials are usually just a formality. Extreme limitations are placed on the right to defence: defence witnesses are rarely allowed; there is no presumption of innocence; defendants are not given the necessary time, facilities or information; and confessions extracted under torture or duress are often accepted as evidence.

In the overwhelming majority of political cases, the verdict of the court is an almost verbatim reproduction of the indictment presented by the procurator, and takes no account of the evidence presented by the defence.

‘History will prove my innocence’

“This sentence can devastate my health but not my spirit,” said 51-year-old journalist Gao Yu after she was sentenced to six years’ imprisonment for “leaking important state secrets”. Amnesty International believes she is a prisoner of conscience.

The “important state secrets” were allegedly divulged in four articles Gao Yu wrote for two Hong Kong publications. They reportedly concerned structural reforms within the Chinese Communist Party and civil service system, and other political issues.

The court verdict against Gao Yu does not indicate that the alleged “state secrets” concerned matters of national security. Chinese legislation on “state secrets” is vague and the meaning given to “state secrets” very broad. It covers matters that would be the subject of public scrutiny in other countries and goes far beyond what is needed to protect national security.

Gao Yu was arrested on 2 October 1993. Her final trial was held in secret, and neither her husband nor her lawyers were notified in advance, as required by law.

This followed a series of grossly unfair judicial proceedings. She was tried three times in 1994. Each time the court found that the evidence against her “still needed to be verified”, which means it was insufficient for conviction. Each time, however, instead of releasing her, they returned her case to the procuracy for further investigation. Finally, on 10 November 1994 the Beijing Intermediate People’s Court sentenced her to six years in jail.

Gao Yu is no stranger to political imprisonment. As a prominent intellectual in the 1989 pro-democracy movement, she was one of the first to be arrested following the crackdown on the protests. She was held without charge or trial for 15 months.

Gao Yu’s time in prison has devastated her health.

Caption:

Gao Yu was sentenced to six years' imprisonment on 10 November 1994 for "leaking important state secrets".

Credit:

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The case of Gao Yu, described in this leaflet, illustrates the human rights violations suffered by thousands like her. Taking action on behalf of Gao Yu is a step towards ending human rights violations in China. Write to the address on the left and ask for her immediate and unconditional release. Join Amnesty International today.

Send your letters to: Li Qiyang Shizhang, (Mayor of Beijing Municipal People's Government, Beijingshi Renmin Zhengfu), 2 Zhengyilu, Dongchengqu, Beijingshi 100744, People's Republic of China.

For more information, contact Amnesty International in your country or write to: Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.
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Leaflet 3

Title:

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NO ONE IS SAFE

Kajikhumar Shabdan

Illustration:

©Lin Muchen

POLITICAL REPRESSION IN XINJIANG

Xinjiang is a politically sensitive region of China, bordering several Asian states including Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan. It is ethnically mixed and predominantly Muslim.

Xinjiang is one of five autonomous regions in China, where officially recognized national minorities have a degree of self-government, in theory. Turkic people form a majority of the population of about 15 million.

Evidence has emerged in recent years of systematic repression of those seeking greater political independence or religious freedom in Xinjiang.

Uighurs, Kazakhs and members of other ethnic groups have been detained without trial or given long prison sentences for nationalist activities. Political trials have been grossly unfair. Some anti-government protests have been violently suppressed, resulting in deaths and injuries.

The death penalty is imposed frequently in Xinjiang. An unknown number of political opponents were executed after nationalist protests there in 1990. Executions of nationalists accused of involvement in underground groups or in bombings have continued.

Poet in prison until he is 80

Kajikhumar Shabdan, an ethnic Kazakh, is a writer, poet and former radio broadcaster. Now 72 years old, he is serving a 15-year prison sentence in Xinjiang, apparently because of his support for a Kazakh nationalist group.

Kajikhumar Shabdan was reportedly detained in July 1987 in the northern district of Tacheng and sentenced later for alleged “espionage”. The authorities, however, have not disclosed any information about his trial. According to unofficial sources, he was held on suspicion of belonging to an underground organization in Xinjiang which had links with a Kazakh nationalist group in what was then the Kazakhstan Soviet Republic of the USSR.

Kajikhumar Shabdan was born in 1924 in Kazakhstan in the former USSR and emigrated with his family to Xinjiang in 1931. He was imprisoned under successive governments in Xinjiang in the 1930s and 1940s on suspicion of “nationalism” and other political charges. In 1958, during one of China’s periods of intensified repression, he was sentenced to 18 years’ imprisonment for allegedly “opposing socialism”. He served his entire term and was released only in 1976.

After his release he published three volumes of a novel, *Crime*, part of which he had written in prison. The authorities prevented his publisher issuing the fourth volume. The novel chronicles the historic upheavals in Central Asia since the 1920s, and criticizes successive governments for their policies towards the region’s Turkic people.

At the time of his arrest Kajikhumar Shabdan was editor-in-chief of a radio station. In 1994 he was reportedly imprisoned in Urumqi No.1 Prison, but there has been no further news about him since then.

Amnesty International is concerned that Kajikhumar Shabdan is reported to be held on political grounds and may not have had a fair trial. In view of his age, the organization is also concerned that his health may rapidly deteriorate in prison. It is calling on the authorities to disclose information about his health and whereabouts and to make public details of his trial, including the exact charges and the evidence against him.

Caption: Kajikhumar Shabdan, a writer and poet, faces imprisonment until he is 80 years old.

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Send your letters to: Abdulahat Abdurixit Zhuxi, (Chairman of Xinjiang Autonomous Regional People's Government), Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu, 2 Zhongshanlu, Wulumuqishi 830041, Xinjiang Zizhiqu, People's Republic of China.

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Leaflet 4

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Li Guotao

Illustration:
©Lin Muchen

Human rights defenders

Those brave enough to stand up for human rights in China are well aware of the risks they run. Human rights activists have been detained without trial for years on end, imprisoned for long periods after grossly unfair trials and ill-treated until their health, if not their spirits, are broken.

Intensified repression of human rights defenders has followed the defeat of popular movements for reform. In the late 1970s the “Democracy Wall” movement gave rise to human rights groups, one of which, the Chinese Human Rights Alliance, was obliterated when all its members were arrested.

The pro-democracy movement a decade later led to the growth of groups advocating respect for human rights. The crackdown on pro-democracy protesters after the Beijing massacre of June 1989 again saw the systematic arrest and imprisonment of human rights activists.

Further attempts to register human rights groups in 1993 and 1994 were similarly crushed.

Campaigner for human rights repeatedly jailed

“In recent years, cases of violations of human rights and damage to the Chinese constitution and law have increased and are spreading to the judiciary itself.”

These are the words of prisoner of conscience Li Guotao, one of the courageous men and women prepared to speak out for human rights in China. The words come from a statement he made when he applied to the Shanghai police for permission to hold a demonstration in May 1994. Far from being granted permission, Li Guotao was arrested and given a three-year sentence of forced labour.

Li Guotao, a businessman with a computer company, is Chairman of the Shanghai Human Rights Association. This group has existed informally since 1978 and at times has claimed more than 100 supporters. Li Guotao, like other members of the group, served a prison sentence for his role in the 1989 pro-democracy movement. In his case the term was two years.

The Shanghai Human Rights Association tried to gain legal registration in 1993, but this was refused by the Shanghai municipal authorities. In October 1993 Li Guotao was detained and reportedly badly beaten by police before being released.

Undeterred, he continued to campaign for human rights. In March 1994 the group addressed a petition, signed by 54 people, to the authorities calling for constitutional and human rights reforms. In May he was arrested once more. At least eight other members of the Human Rights Association were arrested in May and June 1994.

In September 1994 Li Guotao was sentenced without charge or trial to three years’ “re-education through labour”. “Re-education through labour” is a system which allows the police and political authorities to jail opponents without having to justify their detention before a court of law.

Caption:

Prisoners working in a labour camp. Li Guotao is serving a three-year sentence of forced labour because he campaigned for human rights.

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Send your letters to: Xu Kuangdi, Shizhang, (Mayor of the Shanghai Municipal People's Government), Shanghaishi Renmin Zhengfu, 30 Fuzhoulu, Shanghaishi 200002, People's Republic of China.

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Leaflet 5

Title:

CHINA

NO ONE IS SAFE

Ngawang Choekyi

Illustration:

©Lin Muchen

Paper freedoms

1987 saw the resurgence of the pro-independence movement in Tibet. Since then thousands of Tibetan nationalists have been arbitrarily detained for their involvement in peaceful pro-independence activities.

By the end of 1994, at least 628 political detainees were held in Tibet. Most were Buddhist monks and nuns detained solely for their peaceful expression of support for Tibetan independence. Some are held without charge or trial, others are serving long prison terms imposed after unfair trials. Many have been tortured.

Thousands of people have been jailed in the past decade in China because they formed small political groups or spoke out for their beliefs. The Chinese constitution guarantees in principle freedom of speech, assembly and association, but other legal provisions make exercising these rights punishable by imprisonment or administrative detention.

Repression has intensified since 1994, when new restrictions were imposed on fundamental freedoms. In Tibet the authorities introduced new measures aimed at limiting the scope of religious activities and suppressing pro-independence activities.

Eight years for a protest song

In May 1992 a group of nuns from Toelung Nyen nunnery were arrested in Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region. All were detained because they had joined a pro-independence demonstration. Among them was Ngawang Choekyi, a 25-year-old nun. She was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and sent to Drapchi prison.

Since then Ngawang's sentence has been increased by eight years. She was one of 14 nuns who were tried again in 1993, while still serving their sentences, for having composed and recorded pro-independence songs in prison. She is not due for release until 2005.

The songs were recorded on a tape recorder smuggled into the prison. The tape was then circulated secretly in Tibet. On the tape the 14 nuns announce their names and dedicate a song or poem to their friends and supporters. "All of you outside who have done all that you can for us in prison, we are deeply grateful to you and we will never forget you," sings one nun. "We are beaten and treated brutally," sings another, "but this will never change the Tibetan people's perseverance."

The authorities apparently considered the distribution of the tapes to be "spreading counter-revolutionary propaganda", an offence which normally carries a maximum of five years' imprisonment, but can be punished by longer sentences when the accused are considered to be "ring-leaders".

Women make up about one third of the political prisoners known to be held in Tibet. The number of women political prisoners has reportedly tripled in the past three years. In 1994 there were apparently 68 women prisoners in Drapchi, compared with 23 in 1991. All but two are nuns arrested for staging small-scale independence demonstrations.

Caption:

Tibetan nuns in Drapchi prison. All but two of the women in this prison are nuns jailed for joining independence demonstrations.

Credit:

© TIN

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Leaflet 6

Title:

CHINA

NO ONE IS SAFE

Pan Kunming, Rao Yanping
and Yu Shuishen

Illustration:

©Lin Muchen

Religious repression

Religious freedom is restricted in China. Fines or jail sentences are often imposed on those who choose to worship outside the confines of the officially-recognized churches.

All temples, monasteries, mosques and churches must be officially registered. Those religious groups who cannot obtain official registration, or refuse to register, are liable to be persecuted. Peaceful but unregistered religious gatherings have been raided by police and the participants beaten, threatened, fined or sentenced to years in prison or in administrative detention.

There has been a substantial religious revival in China over the past 15 years. In the Christian community, much of the expansion has been in religious groups which conduct their activities outside the Protestant and Catholic churches recognized by the government.

New national regulations were introduced in 1994 which consolidated local restrictions on religious activities. As well as requiring registration for all groups and places of worship, they banned religious activities which "undermine national unity and social stability", without defining what these activities might be.

Jailed for praying on a mountain

Several thousand Roman Catholics joined together to pray on the top of Yi Jia Shan mountain in Jiangxi province on 16 April 1995. It was Easter Sunday — a very special day in the Christian calendar.

Yi Jia Shan mountain, in Chongren county, has long been used as a place of worship by Catholics from across Jiangxi province and religious gatherings have been held there around major religious festivals. Despite this long tradition of peaceful worship, the worshippers have been frequently harassed or persecuted by the authorities.

In 1995 between 30 and 40 Roman Catholics were arrested during the Easter celebrations by police officers from Linchuan city. Many were beaten during the arrests. Two women were apparently so severely injured that they subsequently could not feed themselves without help. The majority of the arrested Catholics were held only briefly, but at least 14, mostly women, were fined 900 yuan — about three months' income. Others were treated even more harshly. Pan Kunming, a 30-year-old man, was sentenced in July 1995 to five years' imprisonment. Rao Yanping, an 18-year-old woman, was sentenced to a term of four years and Yu Shuishen, a 58-year-old man, to a term of three years.

Their only crime seems to have been praying on a mountain without official permission.

Although few details of their trial are available, they were reportedly charged with “damaging the training of [the] militia”. After sentencing they were reported to have been taken to a prison in Fuzhou.

Amnesty International believes they are prisoners of conscience. It believes they have been imprisoned because they peacefully exercised their fundamental human right to freedom of religion, and that they should be released at once.

Caption:

Catholic church in Shanghai. All places of worship or religious gatherings must be officially registered.

Credit:

© Frank Spooner Pictures/Saturo Ohmori

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Taking action on behalf of Pan Kunming, Rao Yanping and Yu Shuishen is a step towards ending human rights violations in China. Write to the address on the left and ask for their immediate and unconditional release. Join Amnesty International today.

Send your letters to: Shu Shenyong Daishengzhang, (Acting Governor of Jiangxi Provincial People’s Government), Jiangxisheng Renmin Zhengfu, 5 Beijingxilu, Nanchangshi 330046, Jiangxisheng, People’s Republic of China.

For more information, contact Amnesty International in your country or write to: Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom. AI Index: ASA 17/86/95

Leaflet 7

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Tang Yuanjuan

Illustration:
©Lin Muchen

Torture

Torture is endemic in many prisons, police stations and other places of detention in China. It is used to extract confessions, or to punish or intimidate prisoners. Both political and criminal prisoners have been tortured and ill-treated to force them to admit to crimes.

Common forms of torture include

kicking, whipping and severe beatings, sometimes while the victim is suspended by the arms. Electric batons that give powerful shocks are also used. Prisoners are handcuffed or shackled with leg-irons in ways that cause intense pain. Many torture victims have died from their injuries. The victims come from all sectors of society. Those most at risk are the less educated or less privileged: workers, peasants, the unemployed and vagrants. They are particularly vulnerable because they do not have the protection of social status, economic means, or political connections.

Some forms of torture are prohibited by law in China, which has also ratified the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Yet many police and other state personnel continue to torture detainees with impunity. The government has failed to introduce the most basic safeguards to prevent torture, or to bring many torturers to justice. This suggests that the use of torture as a tool of coercion or intimidation often results from institutionalized practices and official policies.

Jailed for 20 years

and tortured

Tang Yuanjuan, an assistant engineer at a car factory in Changchun, Jilin province, was among a group of workers arrested in June 1989. The workers were accused of forming a “counter-revolutionary” group, and of organizing two peaceful demonstrations in Changchun during the pro-democracy movement. In November 1990 Tang Yuanjuan, as the alleged leader of the group, was sentenced to 20 years’ imprisonment.

In April 1991 Tang Yuanjuan was transferred to the Lingyuan No.2 Labour-Reform Detachment of Liaoning province. He was assigned to a special squadron of political prisoners jailed during the crackdown on the pro-democracy movement. At least 13 of these prisoners were reportedly subjected to torture and ill-treatment during 1991 and 1992.

In May 1991 Tang Yuanjuan was among 11 political prisoners who were severely beaten for refusing to acknowledge that they were “criminals”. After the beating, Tang Yuanjuan and others were taken to the “correction” unit.

There, these prisoners were stripped naked and repeatedly given shocks with high voltage electric batons on the head, neck, shoulders, armpits, stomach and the inside of the legs. When the electric baton used against Tang Yuanjuan ran out of power, a guard wearing leather boots kicked him. Two of his ribs were broken as a result.

Similar incidents of torture occurred during the following months. The Chinese authorities subsequently denied that the prisoners had been tortured and claimed that the allegations had been investigated, but provided no evidence of this.

Tang Yuanjuan was diagnosed in 1990 as suffering from tuberculosis and hepatitis. His family has repeatedly appealed to the authorities to release him on bail for medical treatment — permitted under Chinese law. The authorities have refused. They claim the illnesses he suffers from have “stabilized”. However, in early 1995 Tang Yuanjuan was reportedly complaining of persistent upper abdominal pain.

Amnesty International is urging the authorities to launch a thorough and impartial judicial investigation into reports of torture at the Lingyuan No. 2 Labour-Reform Detachment. It is also calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Tang Yuanjuan as a prisoner of conscience.

Caption:

One common form of torture in China is the use of electric batons, such as these, which give powerful shocks.

ABUSE OF POWER

Victims of human rights violations in China are numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Torture is endemic. So is ill-treatment. Thousands of political prisoners are in jail, after trials at which the verdict was decided in advance. Countless numbers of people are held in administrative detention without being charged. Each year thousands of people are sentenced to death. In 1994 Amnesty International recorded three times as many executions in China as in the rest of the world put together.

No one is safe in China. Repressive legislation and the widespread abuse of power mean that everyone — not just political dissidents — is at risk. Some violations are committed with the full backing of the law; others, such as torture, continue in breach of the law.

China has undergone an economic revolution in recent times. This has significantly improved the quality of life for many people. However, economic reforms have not been matched by reform of a legal system that fosters gross human rights violations.

Dissent and any activity perceived as a threat are repressed. Independent human rights organizations in China are suppressed. International human rights organizations are not permitted to investigate abuses in China.

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For more information, contact Amnesty International in your country or write to: Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom. AI Index: ASA/17/86/95

Leaflet 8

Title:
CHINA
NO ONE IS SAFE

Tong Yi

Illustration:
©Lin Muchen

Guilty by association

Some Chinese prisoners languish in jail or toil in labour camps not because of anything they themselves have done, but because of their associates.

The friends and families of those seeking political change or religious freedom often face losing their jobs. Sometimes the authorities deprive them not only of their livelihoods but also of their liberty. The most common method is the system of administrative detention which allows people to be detained without charge.

"Re-education through labour" is a form of administrative detention, imposed as a punishment without charge or trial. It can last for up to three years. It can be imposed for political purposes or simply for the personal advantage of people in a position of power.

At any one time, more than 100,000 people are held in "re-education through labour" camps. Conditions are often harsh, with long hours of hard labour, poor food and in some cases ill-treatment for those who are deemed to "resist reform".

Some of the inmates — it is impossible to know how many — are held only because of their links with political or religious dissidents. They are "guilty by association".

Jailed as an accessory

"We cannot separate your case from his", Tong Yi was reportedly told by officials in Beijing, when they accused her of being an "accessory" of prominent dissident Wei Jingsheng.

Tong Yi is a prisoner of conscience, serving a sentence of two-and-a-half years' "re-education through labour", without charge or trial. She had acted as Wei Jingsheng's assistant and translator, and was taken into custody days after revealing to the foreign press that Wei had been seized by public security officials on 1 April 1994.

Tong Yi was initially accused of forging an official stamp from her university on a document submitted to Columbia University in the United States of America, where she had applied to enter a post-graduate program. However, she told relatives that "more than 99 per cent" of the questions directed at her during more than 30 interrogation sessions in Beijing concerned Wei Jingsheng.

Tong Yi was sent to the Hewan Labour Camp in Wuhan, Hubei province, in January 1995. Shortly after, she was brutally beaten by two inmates who were camp "trustees", according to a letter to her mother smuggled out of the camp. She said she was being forced to work 15 hours a day in order to fulfill production quotas. Tong Yi complained to camp officials about the beatings, but they took no action to protect her. The following day, more than 10 women prisoners beat her again, leaving her face and body swollen and covered in bruises. Members of her family were warned that they would lose their jobs if they tried to pursue her complaints. In July 1995 Tong Yi's mother was told she could no longer visit her daughter. She was told that her daughter would be transferred to the Shayang "Re-education through Labour" Farm in Hubei province, where "forceful measures" would be used against her, if Tong Yi persisted in working no more than the legal maximum of eight hours per day.

Caption:

Tong Yi, jailed because the authorities considered her an "accessory" of prominent dissident Wei Jingsheng

ABUSE OF POWER

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violations in China. Write to the address on the left and ask for her immediate and unconditional release. Join Amnesty International today.

Send your letters to: Li Qiyang, Shizhang, (Mayor of Beijing Municipal People's Government), Beijingshi Renmin Zhengfu, 2 Zhengyilu, Dongchengqu, Beijingshi 100744, People's Republic of China.

For more information, contact Amnesty International in your country or write to: Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom. AI Index: ASA 17/86/95

Leaflet 9

Title:

CHINA

NO ONE IS SAFE

Yang Yonglin, Luo Baisui
and Zheng Julan

Illustration:

©Lin Muchen

Secret societies

Members of secret religious societies have faced violations of their human rights ever since the Chinese revolution of 1949. Traditional secret societies which flourished in China under the old regime were banned and tens of thousands of their members were jailed or executed.

Many secret societies were founded to provide mutual support for the dispossessed or for particular social groups. Most had traditions based on indigenous religious beliefs and practices, although some, like the Triads, were involved in organized crime. Many of those formed during the late 19th century and early 20th century were mystical religious groups, drawing on the Daoist, Buddhist and other faiths.

There was a revival of these secret societies during the late 1970s in various provinces. In 1985 a Ministry of Public Security document listed several dozen sects which were apparently active in China then. It gave details of 11 major sects, the measures taken to suppress them and information about sect members who had been arrested.

Forgotten prisoners

"I was shocked that there were so many of them [in prison]... They were all old men, between the ages of 70 and 80 years old. They all have white hair."

Thus a former prisoner described these forgotten prisoners, locked away since the early 1950s, who are members of the secret religious sect Yi Guan Dao (Way of Unity). Many sect members have died in prison. Many others have been executed for their beliefs.

The Yi Guan Dao society was formed in northern China in the 19th century. After 1949 it was declared "counter-revolutionary" and crushed during successive political campaigns in the 1950s. Released prisoners said in 1994 that several hundred such Yi Guan Dao prisoners were still jailed in north China. They spoke of harsh prison conditions and frequent beating by guards and other

prisoners. They said that over the years hundreds of prisoners had died of old age or as a result of ill-treatment and neglect.

More members of the Yi Guan Dao were arrested in the northern provinces of Shanxi, Shaanxi and Gansu, and in the southern province of Yunnan during the 1980s. Some were tried and sentenced in 1983 at the height of an “anti-crime” campaign launched in August 1983 which resulted in thousands of summary executions. Some were executed and others sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Among those imprisoned were Yang Yonglin, Luo Baisui and Zheng Julan. They lived in Lantian county in Shaanxi province and were in their 20s and 30s when they were arrested in 1983 together with several other people accused of “using secret societies” to carry out “counter-revolutionary” activities.

Yang Yonglin was accused of spreading the doctrine of Yi Guan Dao and of speaking at a public meeting. Luo Baisui was accused of asking his brother to visit an imprisoned Yi Guan Dao leader to seek his advice on how to restore the society and of speaking at a meeting. They were both sentenced to life imprisonment. Zheng Julan was accused of visiting a Yi Guan Dao leader in prison and of discussing how to restore the society with other members. She was sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment. They are prisoners of conscience.

Caption:

Condemned prisoners being paraded before execution. Members of secret religious societies such as Yi Guan Dao have been sentenced to death and executed.

ABUSE OF POWER

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The cases of Yang Yonglin, Luo Baisui and Zheng Julan, described in this leaflet, illustrate the human rights violations suffered by thousands like them. Taking action on behalf of Yang Yonglin, Luo Baisui and Zheng Julan is a step towards ending human rights violations in China. Write to the address on the left and ask for their immediate and unconditional release. Join Amnesty International today.

Send your letters to: Cheng Andong Shengzhang, (Governor of Shaanxi Provincial People's Government), Shaanxisheng Renmin Zhengfu, Xincheng Dayuan, Xi'anshi 710004, Shaanxisheng, People's Republic of China.

For more information, contact Amnesty International in your country or write to: Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom. AI Index: ASA 17/86/95

Leaflet 10

Title:
CHINA
NO ONE IS SAFE

Zhang Jingsheng

Illustration:
©Lin Muchen

WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS

Independent trade unions are not allowed in China. The authorities have crushed all attempts to form independent unions or labour rights groups.

Workers were actively involved in the 1989 pro-democracy movement. Independent labour groups, known as Workers Autonomous Federations, sprang up in many cities in late May 1989.

Demonstrations and protests were brought to a brutal end on 4 June 1989 when at least a thousand people were killed by troops called in to "clear" Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

In the repression that followed, Workers Autonomous Federations were banned, and their organizers arrested and jailed for "counter-revolutionary activities". Many other workers who had taken part in the protests were imprisoned on criminal charges. In general, workers were more harshly treated in detention than students and intellectuals, and many were beaten and tortured.

Since 1989 labour activists have repeatedly attempted to set up independent organizations to defend workers' interests. Each time they have been detained and jailed.

Jailed because he supported workers' rights
"Solitary and lonely, I stare at an empty future,
the rest of life stretching endlessly ahead..."

These melancholy lines are from a song written in prison by Zhang Jingsheng, an industrial worker serving a long prison sentence for promoting workers' rights. Several of his protest songs have circulated around Chinese prisons and have become popular among the inmates.

Zhang Jingsheng is a prisoner of conscience serving a 13-year sentence in Hunan No. 1 Prison, in Yuanjiang city, because he spoke out in favour of political and democratic reforms.

Zhang Jingsheng worked at the Shaoguang Machinery Factory in Changsha, Hunan province. During the 1989 pro-democracy movement, he helped to set up a branch of the Workers Autonomous Federation (WAF) in Changsha.

Members of the WAFs included factory workers, office workers, journalists and civil servants. Among the grievances of the WAFs were the wide discrepancy in working and living conditions between workers and plant managers, and lack of genuine workers' representation.

Zhang Jingsheng was arrested in May 1989 after calling for political reform at mass rallies. In December 1989 he was convicted of "counter-revolutionary propaganda" by the People's Intermediate Court of Changsha.

Zhang Jingsheng was accused of having spoken in favour of "democracy and freedom" at Hunan University. He was also accused of inciting workers to strike and students to boycott classes, and of writing an anti-government pamphlet. Amnesty International believes he is a prisoner of conscience.

Zhang Jingsheng has campaigned for workers' rights and democracy all his adult life. He spent four years in jail in the early 1980s as a prisoner of conscience after becoming involved in the "democracy wall" movement of the late 1970s.

When he is released in 2002 Zhang Jingsheng, who is in poor health, will have spent 17 years in Chinese prisons — a sign of the authorities' determination to prevent the establishment of independent workers' organizations.

Caption:

Zhang Jingsheng, imprisoned for campaigning for workers' rights

ABUSE OF POWER

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The case of Zhang Jingsheng, described in this leaflet, illustrates the human rights violations suffered by thousands like him.

Taking action on behalf of Zhang Jingsheng is a step towards ending human rights violations in China. Write to

the address on the left and ask for his immediate and unconditional release. Join Amnesty International today.

Send your letters to: Yang Zhengwu Shengshang, (Governor of the Hunan Provincial People's Government), Hunansheng Renmin Zhengfu, 7 Wuyizhonglu, Changshashi, Hunan Sheng, People's Republic of China.

For more information, contact Amnesty International in your country or write to: Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.
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Leaflet 11:

Title:
CHINA
NO ONE IS SAFE

Zhou Guoqiang

Illustration:
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'Re-education through labour'

"Re-education through labour" is one form of administrative detention. It allows the police and other authorities to jail opponents without having to justify their detention before a court of law. It is widely used to detain and silence political dissidents in China. At any one time more than 100,000 people are detained in labour camps undergoing "re-education".

"Re-education through labour" is a punishment imposed without charge or trial by committees made up of representatives of the police and local government bodies. They may impose sentences of up to three years, renewable for up to one year.

An appeal procedure was introduced in 1990, but it is lengthy, cumbersome and does not provide real redress. No political cases have ever been overturned on appeal, even when the grounds for detention were shown to be based on false information.

Inmates in "re-education through labour" camps often face harsh conditions, long hours of forced labour and ill-treatment at the hands of guards and other inmates.

Sentenced without trial to forced labour

Zhou Guoqiang is a lawyer and a poet. He is also a labour activist. He is currently serving a sentence of three years' "re-education through labour", imposed without charge or trial, in the Shuanghe labour camp in Heilongjiang province.

Zhou Guoqiang, aged 40, had been involved in a number of dissident groups, in particular the unofficial Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation set up in 1989, and the Peace Charter, formed in 1993. In 1994 he became involved in the League for the Protection of the Rights of Working People (LPRWP). The league aimed to establish a nationwide information network and a mediation body to help settle labour disputes. Its founders intended to start the process of obtaining legal registration for the LPRWP on 9 March 1994.

However, days before their planned visit to the Ministry of Civil Administration, several members of the LPRWP were secretly detained. Zhou Guoqiang was detained in Beijing on 3 March 1994. He was accused of "collaborating with hostile organizations and elements both inside and outside the country to carry out anti-government activities".

Six months later, in September 1994, Zhou Guoqiang was sentenced without charge or trial to three years' "re-education through labour". Several other members of the group were also sentenced to terms of "re-education through labour". Wang Hui, Zhou Guoqiang's wife, was also detained and although she was subsequently released she remained under heavy police surveillance.

Zhou Guoqiang appealed against the decision to sentence him, arguing that the police had detained him longer than allowed by administrative regulations, and had failed to give a clear reason for his detention. The Beijing Western District Court agreed in January 1995 to hear his case in appeal. Although the law states that the court should make a judgment within three months, the outcome of the appeal is not yet known.

Zhou Guoqiang is said to have been detained by the Chinese authorities six times since 1989. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

Caption:

Zhou Guoqiang has reportedly been detained six times since 1989 because of his involvement in dissident groups. He is currently serving a three-year term of "re-education through labour".

ABUSE OF POWER

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Send your letters to: Tian Fengshan Shengzhang, (Governor of the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Government), Heilongjiangsheng Renmin Zhengfu, 202 Zhongshanlu, Haerbinshi 150001, Heilongjiangsheng, People's Republic of China.

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