

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 247/94 (ASA 22/03/94, 24 June 1994) - Health concern / Degrading Treatment / Fear of Refoulement

**JAPAN: 61 Chinese nationals, including possible asylum-seekers**

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On 1 July 1994, the 61 Chinese nationals were transferred to a Maritime Safety Agency vessel and sent back to the People's Republic of China. To Amnesty International's knowledge, they did not receive the medical attention some required and they were not given the opportunity to apply for political asylum.

Amnesty International is concerned that the 61 Chinese nationals were held in very poor conditions off the coast for Japan for six weeks with inadequate medical facilities. It believes that some may be very sick by the time they arrive back in China. It is also concerned that some of the 61 may have wished to apply for political asylum in Japan but were not given the opportunity to do so.

Amnesty International believes that the 61 Chinese nationals were handled in a manner wholly incompatible with Japan's international obligations under the Refugee Convention of 1951 and that the unsanitary conditions in which they were held for several weeks may have constituted cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. The organization urges the Japanese government to carry out an inquiry into the circumstances which led to the 61 Chinese nationals being denied basic medical attention and adequate accommodation.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send further telegrams/telexes/faxes express and airmail letters in Japanese, English or your own language:**

- expressing regret that the 61 Chinese nationals were sent back to China, apparently without receiving adequate medical attention;
- expressing concern that some may have wished to apply for political asylum in Japan and were effectively denied the opportunity to do so;
- urging the Japanese Government to carry out an inquiry into the circumstances which led to the 61 Chinese nationals being held for six weeks without adequate accommodation or medical attention.

**APPEALS TO:**

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**Salutation: Dear Director**

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**Telegrams: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, Japan**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

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Governor, Kagoshima Prefecture  
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**Telegrams: Governor Tsuchiya, Kagoshima, Japan**  
**Salutation: Dear Governor**

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**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

and to diplomatic representatives of Japan accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 August 1994.