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PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

APPEAL FOR LI QINGXI and ZHAO CHANGQING

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Li Qingxi - Shanxi Province

Li Qingxi, an unemployed worker, has reportedly been detained since 16 January 1998 when the 41-year-old was taken by ten police officers from his home in Datong city, Shanxi province.

Li Qingxi had publicly posted up declarations calling for free and independent trade unions. On the morning of his detention, Li Qingxi had reportedly taken copies of his declaration to the offices of the mining company where he formerly worked.

On 19 January, officials from the Datong City Public Security Bureau reportedly denied that Li Qingxi was detained but on the same day his 14-year-old son, Li Zheng, was asked to take personal effects to his father at the Datong No. 4 Detention Centre. He was not permitted to see his father.

Shen Liangqing, a well known dissident and former procurator, made a direct appeal to Tao Siju, the Minister of Public Security calling for the release of Li Qingxi. Shen Liangqing was reported as saying that, "The detention of Li Qingxi not only violates his rights under Chinese law but also goes against the "United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights"⁴. China signed the Covenant on 27 October 1997,

but it has not yet been ratified. The Covenant will become enforceable in China once the National People's Congress ratifies it.

Other dissidents such as **Tian Xiaoming** and **Wang Hongxue**, have also called for the release of Li Qingxi and others held by the authorities. It is reported that Wang Hongxue from Anhui province, is currently resisting efforts by authorities to confine him to a mental hospital allegedly in response to his outspoken criticism of human rights in China.

On 28 January, a group of Chinese dissidents and activists, most of them in exile, sent an open letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, calling for pressure to be put upon the Chinese authorities to release Li Qingxi.

The group of signatories include several dissidents still in China: **Xu Shuiliang**, **Yang Qinheng**, who were both detained briefly on 9 February in connection with the expulsion from China of visiting exiled dissident, Wang Bingzhang. **Tang Yuanxi** and **Shen Liangqing**. In addition, a wide range of exiled dissidents and former prisoners of conscience such as **Fu Shenqi** and **Wang Xizhe** signed the open letter.

The signatories stressed that China had now formally signed the United Nations International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights. Rights enshrined in the Covenant include the "right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice". Independent trade unions are not permitted in China. There is one official trade union, the All China Federation of Trade Unions, under its Constitution, it is controlled by the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

Zhao Changqing - Shaanxi Province

On 23 January 1998, it was reported that **Zhao Changqing**, a 28-year-old worker, was formally arrested and taken from his home to an unknown destination. Since that time his family have had no information about his situation.

Ten days earlier on 13 January, Zhao Changqing who works at the Nuclear Industrial General Company No. 813 factory in Hanzhong, Shaanxi Province, had reportedly been detained in his dormitory and barred from leaving.

At the beginning of 1998, Zhao Changqing reportedly distributed leaflets protesting a ruling by his factory that he was not allowed to take part in local People's Congress elections on 14 January. It was alleged that factory officials had specified that only Communist Party officials above the rank of Vice Factory Director could stand for election. This contravenes China's election law which stipulates that, with few exceptions including convicted criminals, all adult citizens who are able to gather 10 nominations are eligible to stand for election. Zhao Changqing had reportedly gathered 60 nominations.

Factory officials and police in Hanzhong have allegedly refused to comment on the case of Zhao Changqing.

Zhao Changqing had previously been detained for six months following the 1989 pro-democracy protests.

Background

Worker unrest has been growing in China recently. It is seen as a potential catalyst for wider social unrest. China is currently reforming its state industry sector and there are reports that the number of redundant workers is expected to increase by an estimated 11 million this year.

In the past few months reports of demonstrations and protests by workers throughout China have become more widespread. Some demonstrations, notably in Sichuan province, have led to reported detentions and arrests.

Labour activists and dissidents have also been more active, issuing a large number of appeals to the authorities to allow the establishment of independent trade unions. Veteran dissident, **Qin Yongmin** is one of those who have made many such appeals since October 1997.

Qin Yongmin was reportedly detained in his hometown of Wuhan, on 30 January for several hours as he attempted to go to Beijing to visit his daughter for Chinese New Year. On 22 December last year, he issued a declaration encouraging workers throughout China to call for the establishment of independent trade unions.

Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters in English, Chinese or in your own language, urging

- ◆ that Li Qingxi and Zhao Changqing be immediately and unconditionally released unless they have been charged with recognizably criminal offences in accordance with international standards;
- ◆ the authorities disclose the whereabouts and legal status of Li Qingxi and Zhao Changqing, as well as any charges made against them;
- ◆ that the harassment of workers who peacefully exercise their right to freedom of expression be stopped.

Minister of Public Security of the People's Republic of China

TAO Siju Buzhang

Gong'anbu

14 Dongchang'anlu

Beijingshi 100741

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPRC CN

Telegram: Minister of Public Security, Beijing, China - Salutation: Your Excellency

Governor of the Shaanxi Provincial People's Government

WANG Shousen Shengzhang

(Appeals for Zhao

Changqing)

Shaanxisheng Renmin Zhengfu

Xixin Jie

Xi'an Shi 710004

Shaanxisheng

People's Republic of China

Telegram: Governor, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China - Salutation: Dear Governor

Governor of the Shanxi Provincial People's Government

SUN Wensheng Shengzhang

(Appeals for Li Qingxi)

Shanxisheng Renmin Zhengfu

101 Fudong Jie

Taiyuanshi 030072

Shanxisheng

People's Republic of China

Telegram: Governor, Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, China -Salutation: Dear Governor

KEYWORDS: UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE / TRADE UNIONISTS / FACTORY WORKERS /
INCOMMUNICADO DETENTION /

This document is sent to China and CHIRAN Coordinators for action by groups. It is sent to Sections for information only. Check with the East Asia Sub-Regional Team if sending appeals after 1 April 1998.

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