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PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Roman Catholics detained in Jiangxi province

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Over 200 Roman Catholics were detained in Jiangxi province in 1997 and some of them reportedly tortured in detention solely for practising their religion, according to a report recently received by Amnesty International. Most of them were detained for periods varying from one to three months, then asked to pay a fine upon their release.

The arrests were reportedly carried out by the authorities of Linchuan city (formerly Fuzhou city) and Chongren county, in Jiangxi province, on two separate occasions in August 1997 and between mid-November and 30 December 1997. They are believed to have been aimed at intimidating Catholics who remain loyal to the Vatican and preventing them from celebrating mass outside the officially recognized churches.

In the past few years, many Roman Catholics in this area have been arbitrarily detained for gathering on Yujia mountain, in Chongren county, during major religious festivals. Some have been sentenced to prison terms for taking part in such peaceful religious gathering. Yujia mountain (Yujiaoshan) has long been used as a place of worship by Roman Catholics from across Jiangxi province, with thousands of people gathering there to celebrate mass at Easter, Christmas and other religious festivals.

In August 1997, seventeen Catholics were reportedly detained in the area around the time of the feast of the Assumption of Mary (15 August). Eleven of those detained have been identified as being Fr. **Deng Ruolun**, first apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Yujiang; six nuns: **Xiao Lan** (aged 32), **Long Mei** (aged 24), **Yuan Mei** (aged 20), **Cheng Jinli** (aged 24), **Hua Jingjin** (aged 30) and **Jun Fang**; two women described as leading lay Catholics: **Zhang Jiehong** (aged 50) and **Zhang Jiyu** (aged 48); and two other lay Catholics: **Liu Haicheng** and **Zhou Xiaoling**.

According to the report, Zhang Jiyu was the first to be detained in the afternoon of 13 August 1997. Her arrest is believed to be connected to a complaint she had addressed to a women's organization in Beijing to protest against the imprisonment of her 17-year-old daughter, detained for taking part in a religious ceremony on Yujia mountain. The name of the 17 year-old girl and the date of her arrest is not known to Amnesty International.

Fr. Deng Ruolun was reportedly arrested on the night of 14 August 1997 while he was celebrating mass in a private house for the six nuns and the owners of the house. The latter, Liu Haicheng and Zhou Xiaoling, were detained the following day. Another leading lay Catholic, Zhang Jiehong, was detained on 16 August. On 20 August, Fr. Deng Ruolun's father and five other people whose names are not known, including two seminarians, were also detained.

Four of those detained, Deng Ruolun, Zhang Jiehong, Liu Haicheng and Zhou Xiaoling, are reported to have been tortured by police while in detention, in an attempt to force them to confess to "crimes". The current whereabouts and legal status of those detained in August 1997 are not known.

Another 200 Catholics were reportedly detained in this area between 14 November and 30 December 1997. Most were arbitrarily held without charge for periods varying from one to three months, then required to pay a fine upon their release. Similar arrests have been carried out in Chongren county in previous years during the period leading to Christmas. Six Catholics from this area are reported to have been sentenced to terms of _re-education through labour_ on 25 June 1996. They are **Deng Rongmai**, who was sentenced to one years' re-education through labour, and **Wu Yinghua, Liao Yuejin, Lou Xinlan, He Dongqiao** and **Gao Rongmai**, who received two-year terms.

In April 1995, during Easter celebrations, between 30 and 40 Roman Catholics were detained by police officers from Linchuan city, Jiangxi province, after a mass prayer meeting was held on Yujiashan mountain. Most of those detained were released after payment of a fine equivalent to about three months' income but four people were charged and sentenced to prison terms. Three men, **Pan Kunming, Yu Qixiang** and **Yu Shuisheng**, and one woman, **Rao Yanping** who was 17 years old at the time of her detention, received sentences of between two and five years' imprisonment¹. Their appeals against their sentences were rejected. Four of their relatives have subsequently filed a further appeal with the Supreme People's Court which questions the legality of the sentences and the objectivity of the court and judges.

Zeng Jingmu, the 77-year-old Bishop of Yujiang, remains imprisoned. He was detained in November 1995 for organising religious meetings in his home and is reported to be currently held in Chongren county in a detention facility for criminal suspects who have not yet been convicted. This is despite his having been assigned three years' "re-education through labour" in May 1996. He is reported to have been denied family visits since his arrest and to be in poor health but denied adequate medical treatment.

¹ See AI document "*Christians arrested during Easter and others serving sentences*", ASA 17/26/95, May 1995. Yu Qixiang, sentenced to two years' imprisonment, should now be out of detention, but there has been no confirmation of his release. Yu Shuxiang was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and is due for release in April 1998.

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

- ◆ the immediate and unconditional release of all Roman Catholics detained in Jiangxi province since 1995, including Deng Ruolun, Xiao Lan, Long Mei, Yuan Mei, Cheng Jinli, Hua Jingjin, Jun Fang, Zhang Jiehong, Zhang Jiyu, Liu Hiacheng and Zhou Xiaoling detained in 1997;
- ◆ the immediate and unconditional release of Deng Rongmai, Wu Yinghua, Liao Yeujin, Lou Xinlan, He Dongqiao and Gao Rongmai who were detained in Jiangxi province in 1996;
- ◆ the immediate and unconditional release of Pan Kunming and Rao Yanping detained in Jiangxi province in 1995;
- ◆ confirmation of the release of Yu Qixiang and assurance that Yu Shuxiang will be released as due in April 1998;
- ◆ the provision of appropriate medical treatment to, and the immediate and unconditional release of, Zeng Jingmu, Bishop of Yujiang, detained in Jiangxi province in 1995;
- ◆ that a full enquiry into allegations that detainees have been tortured in detention be carried out and any perpetrators brought to justice;
- ◆ urging that the Chinese authorities ensure the protection of all Roman Catholics in China peacefully exercising their right to freedom of religion.

Please send appeals to:

Premier of the People's Republic of China

ZHU Rongji Zongli

Guowuyuan

9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie

Beijingshi 100032

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN

Telegram: Premier Zhu Rongji, Beijing, China

Salutation: Your Excellency

Governor of Jiangxi Provincial People's Government

SHU Shengyou Daishengzhang

Jiangxisheng Renmin Zhengfu

5 Beijingxilu

Nanchangshi 330046

Jiangxisheng

People's Republic of China

Telegram: Governor, Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, China

Salutation: Dear Governor

Director of the Jiangxi Provincial Department of Justice

FAN Youxian Tingzhang

Sifating

50 Beijingxilu

Nanchangshi

Jiangxisheng

People's Republic of China

Telegram: Director of the Provincial Department of Justice, Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, China

Salutation: Dear Director

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