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£CHINA

@Appeal for Human Rights Activists Detained in Shanghai

25 MAY 1994

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Amnesty International is calling on the Chinese authorities to release five human rights activists who have been recently detained by police in Shanghai and are reported to be held without charge. All were members of a Human Rights Association formed in Shanghai last year, which was refused legal registration by the Shanghai municipal authorities in March 1993.

They include **Li Guotao**, the chairman of the association who is reported to have been taken into police custody on 1 May 1994; **Dai Xuezhong**, another member of the group who was reportedly detained on 3 May; **Lin Muchen**, an artist who was detained on 6 May at Shanghai airport as he was about to board a flight to go and study in the USA; and **Yang Zhou**, a spokesman for the association who was detained on 12 May. Another member of the group, **Wang Fuchen**, was taken into police custody in April 1994, during the visit to Shanghai of the French Prime Minister, and has not been heard of since then. According to unconfirmed reports, another dissident in Shanghai, **Yang Qingheng**, was detained on 10 May, but no further information has been available about his situation since then.

The five human rights activists whose detention has been confirmed have not been charged with any offence and, despite enquiries by their relatives, the authorities have not given any reason for their detention.

According to unofficial sources, they are being detained because of their peaceful activities to promote respect for basic human rights and democratic reforms. Their arrests are the latest in a series of arbitrary arrests of dissidents in Beijing and Shanghai since March 1994. According to some sources, these arrests are aimed at preventing any public expression of dissent prior to 4 June 1994, which will mark the fifth anniversary of the crackdown on the 1989 pro-democracy protests.

Li Guotao, Wang Fuchen, Lin Muchen and Yang Zhou were all founding members of the Shanghai-based Human Rights Association, which had existed for a period as a study group before its members unsuccessfully sought legal registration with the authorities last year. All have been actively trying to promote reforms for many years and were arbitrarily detained or imprisoned on several occasions as a result. Yang Zhou, for instance, was detained without charge at least six times during the past year - on one occasion for signing a "Peace Charter" issued by a group of people in Beijing in November 1993. Like several of the others detained in Shanghai, Yang Zhou, who is now aged 50, spent several years in jail for expressing his opinions during the early 1980s and from 1991 to 1992.

Several of those detained are reported to have recently sponsored a petition calling for constitutional and democratic reforms. The petition, written in the name of 54 people in Shanghai, was addressed in late

March 1994 to the Chairman of the National People's Congress (China's legislature), which was then meeting in Beijing. The petition was later published in a Chinese-language newspaper outside China.

Some of them had also reportedly applied to the police authorities for permission to hold demonstrations in May, notably Li Guotao who reportedly handed over such an application to local police shortly before he was arrested. According to the *South China Morning Post*, a Hong Kong newspaper, a statement supporting his application said: "In recent years, cases of violations of human rights, and damage to the Chinese constitution and laws have increased and are spreading into the judiciary itself."

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

- *calling on the Chinese authorities to release Li Guotao, Dai Xuezhong, Lin Muchen, Yang Zhou, Wang Fuchen and Yang Qingheng immediately and unconditionally, unless they have been charged with recognizably criminal offences in accordance with international human rights standards; and*
- *urging that if they have already been charged with recognizably criminal offences, the authorities make public the specific accusations on which these charges are based and ensure that they are granted access to their relatives and lawyers of their choice without delay.*

Please send appeals to:

Prime Minister

Li Peng

Guowuyuan

9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie

Beijing 100032

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPRC CN

22478 MFERT CN

Faxes: + 86 1 512 5810

(via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

(Please forward to Premier Li Peng)

(Salutation: Your Excellency)

Mayor of Shanghai

Huang Ju

Shanghaishi Renmin Zhengfu

30 Fuzhoulu

Shanghaishi 200002

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 333 15 SMERT

(Please forward to Huang Ju Shizhang)

Telegram: Mayor Huang Ju, Shanghai, China

(Salutation: Dear Mayor)

Director of Shanghai Public Security Bureau

Zhu Daren

Gong'anju

185 Fuzhoulu

Shanghaishi 200002

People's Republic of China

Telegram: Director of the Bureau of Public Security Zhu Daren, Shanghai, China

(Salutation: Dear Director)

KEYWORDS: HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS1 / PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE1 / POLITICAL ACTIVISTS / ARTISTS / DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL / INCOMMUNICADO DETENTION / ANNIVERSARIES /
