PUBLIC AI Index: ASA 17/026/2006

04 May 2006

Further Information on UA 271/05 (ASA 17/037/2005, 14 October 2005) and follow-up (ASA 17/040/2005, 25 October 2005; ASA 17/005/2006, 6 February 2006; ASA 17/018/2006, 14 March 2006) - Fear of torture and ill-treatment/arbitrary detention

CHINA Chen Guangcheng (m), aged 34

Chen Hua (m), aged 27

Chen Guangchun (m), aged in his 40s

Chen Guangyu (m), aged 32, cousin of Chen Guangcheng Yuan Weijing (f), aged 29, wife of Chen Guangcheng

Chen Guangjun (m), aged 43

Chen Hua was reportedly released on 12 February, but is not allowed to contact people outside his home village of Dongshigu. Chen Guangchun was reportedly released at around the same time. Chen Guangyu and Chen Guangjun were released on bail on 18 April, after 37 days in custody. They are not thought to be in immediate danger, but have been prevented from returning to Dongshigu village.

The whereabouts of blind human rights defender Chen Guangcheng, who had been acting as legal adviser to villagers in Shangdong province, are now unclear. He had been thought to be held at Yinan county police detention centre, but Chen Guangyu and Chen Guangjun were held there, and they apparently did not see him. Local villagers suspect that Chen Guangcheng is held at the government-run "Victoria Holiday Resort" in Yinan county, but the authorities have given no formal notification of where he is detained.

Chen Guangcheng's wife Yuan Weijing is kept under 24-hour surveillance in her home by around 20 police officers. Her phone has been cut off, and she is not allowed to contact anyone outside. Her back and side are apparently still painful as a result of the assault by police on 11 March, but she has still not been allowed to have a proper medical check.

Three men were detained in February on suspicion of leading hundreds of villagers in a 5 February protest calling for the release of Chen Hua, and an end to the surveillance of Chen Guangcheng. Chen Guangdong, Chen Gengjiang and Chen Guanghe were detained on 13, 16 and 23 February respectively. They were formally charged on 22 March with "intentional damage to public property" and have reportedly been beaten in custody. Their families received official notification of the criminal charges on 26 March, but the police have refused their families' requests to visit them.

Many thanks to all who have sent appeals. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation and pursue the case through longer-term campaigning methods. No further action is requested from the UA network at present.