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@New crackdown on dissidents before 4 June anniversary

25 MAY 1995

AI INDEX: ASA 17/31/95

DISTR: REL CO/GR/SC

At least nine dissidents have been detained in Beijing and several others are reported to be missing in the run-up to the sixth anniversary of events in China on 4 June 1989. One of the detainees, Wang Dan, has started a hunger-strike in protest at his detention. The arrests followed two recent petitions calling for respect of human rights.

Over the past few months, dissidents, academics and scientists have presented a series of petitions to the Chinese authorities and Communist Party leadership calling for a basic guarantee of human rights and legislative changes. They culminated last week in two petitions, one released on 15 May 1995 and signed by 45 people, calling for tolerance of dissent and the release of all those still imprisoned for their participation in events in May and June 1989. The other was signed by 56 people and released on 19 May 1995.

On Thursday 18 May at 4.30am, **Huang Xiang**, age 45, a signatory of the recent petition, and his wife **Zhang Ling**, were detained by police from their home in Beijing. There has been no news of them since. Huang Xiang has been detained five times for his dissident activities since the late 1970s.

Liu Xiaobo, age 40, a literary critic who was imprisoned for 18 months after the 1989 crackdown, was arrested by police officers on the evening of Thursday 18 May 1995. One report says that he was arrested at his girlfriend's home while collecting signatures for the petition entitled "Draw Lessons from the Blood" which was released on 19 May 1995 after his arrest, another report says that he was arrested while handing the same petition to a western news agency in Beijing. "Draw Lessons from the Blood" was reportedly signed by 56 writers, scholars and former student leaders and seeks major revisions in the law governing freedom of the press, freedom of association, guarantees of basic human rights and the establishment of a constitutional court.

Uniformed and plainclothes police officers reportedly arrested **Liu Nianchun**, age 47, a labour activist who has been detained several times previously, at his home, at 4pm on 21 May 1995.

Chu Hailan, Liu Nianchun's wife, was not told by the police why her husband was being detained. At 9pm that evening his house was reportedly searched by police who presented a search warrant. Letters, documents, notebooks and personal belongings were taken away. Despite the protests of Liu Nianchun's family, the police are reported not to have recorded all the items they removed. Liu Nianchun had earlier rejected an offer by police to travel with his wife, child and police officers to Hainan island for a "holiday" at the government's expense over the period of the anniversary of 4 June 1989. Liu Nianchun had been signatory to one petition and the initiator of another.

Former student leader **Wang Dan**, age 25, who was imprisoned for 4 years after the 1989 crackdown, was detained from his home by three policemen on Sunday 21 May 1995 at 5.15pm. According to the New York-based organization Human Rights in China, his family were told that he was being taken away for questioning and since then he has announced that he has started a hunger strike.

For several months Wang Dan had been under close surveillance, being followed everywhere by police. Prior to his arrest he wrote a declaration to be publicized if he was rearrested, announcing his intention to start a hunger strike. On the day of his arrest, Wang Dan's home was searched, including his parents' rooms, and police reportedly removed eight bags of his belongings and seized a number of books and magazines.

At 3am on 23 May 1995 police officers visited Wang Dan's home and told his family that he was being detained by the public security bureau and was under investigation for public order offences, but gave no further details of the alleged offences. Later the same day his mother visited the public security bureau. She was not permitted to see her son and was not given any further information about why he was being detained. However, during the conversation one policeman reportedly mentioned that Wang Dan had been a signatory to two petitions.

After the release last week of the petition calling for tolerance of dissent and the release of prisoners detained since 1989, to which Wang Dan was a signatory, he was continually followed by nine plainclothes policemen, one of whom reportedly threatened to beat him to death. Wang Dan was also an initiator of the petition which Liu Xiaobo was finalizing when he was arrested.

Yang Kuanxing, age 25, was arrested from home at 10pm on Sunday 21 May 1995, by uniformed and plainclothes police officers. The police initially asked to see Yang Kuanxing's marriage certificate, then searched his house, without producing a warrant, and took away several handwritten articles. Yang Kuanxing was a petition signatory. In 1989 he was a student leader from Shandong.

Police from the Haidian district public security bureau are reported to have visited **Jiang Qisheng** at 2pm on 23 May 1995 and said that they wanted to talk to him about the forthcoming anniversary of 4 June 1989. The police took him from his home "for investigation" after making him sign a Summons. Jiang Qisheng was a signatory of the petition calling for tolerance and an instigator of another of the petitions. There has been no news of him since 23 May 1995. He was detained for over a year after June 1989 and for two months from 28 May 1994.

Sha Yuguang, age 45, a veteran pro-democracy activist, was taken away by police on 23 May 1995 at 9pm. Police gave him a Summons but did not give any reason for his detention. He is an instigator of two of the petitions and is a leading advocate of workers' rights.

Gou Qinghui, a Christian and wife of a jailed dissident, age 33, was taken from her home by four policemen and detained for two hours on the evening of 23 May 1995. According to Gou Qinghui's mother, the police did not produce any documentation before her daughter was detained. Gou Qinghui was an instigator of one petition and recently published an open letter about the situation of workers and peasants in China. Her mother said that Gou suffered a minor stroke while in police custody in May last year. Gou's husband, **Xiao Biguang**, has been detained since April 1994. He was brought to a closed trial in April 1995 on a charge of "swindling" but no verdict was announced.

Bao Zunxin, age 56, intellectual and signatory of the petition for tolerance, was detained on 23 May 1995 at 4pm by police and released three hours later.

On Wednesday 17 May 1995, just after 11pm, democracy activist **Wang Xizhe**, a former prisoner of conscience, age 46, was detained by police in Beijing. Wang Xizhe is reported to have travelled to Beijing from his home in Guangdong province to file an appeal with the Supreme Court against the extension of his 14-year sentence, the remainder of which he was serving on parole. His sentence was due to expire on 28 April 1995, but has reportedly been extended until the end of 1999. He has also been subject to daily police surveillance and must report regularly to the authorities.

In early May 1995 Wang Xizhe reportedly wrote a protest letter to the Chinese government over the extension of his sentence on parole and he was warned that he "must suffer the consequences" of any protest action he took. According to Human Rights in China, at 2pm on 17 May 1995, Wang Xizhe had lunch with two other dissidents; after lunch he returned to his hotel, but later disappeared without paying his hotel bill.

Four other people are reported to have disappeared or to have been briefly detained. **Deng Huanwu**, a petition signatory, has not been seen in Beijing since Sunday 21 May. Neither has **Liu Yong**, the younger brother of detained student leader Liu Gang. Liu Yong had reportedly telephoned a friend on Sunday and told him he would be coming to his home immediately. He did not arrive and nobody has heard from him since.

On the same day, poet **Liao Yiwu** and university teacher **Chen Xiaoping**, who were both detained in 1989 and are two initiators of the most recent petition, also disappeared from Beijing. Chen Xiaoping was detained for ten hours by the police and later released.

According to Human Rights in China, the wives of two prominent pro-democracy activists, **Wang Zhihong** and **Zhang Fengying**, are reportedly being constantly followed by plainclothes police officers. Wang Zhihong, the wife of pro-democracy activist Chen Ziming, was an initiator of the most recent petition to the authorities. Since Ren Wanding's detention in 1989, his wife, Zhang Fengying, has appealed many times to the authorities for an improvement in his conditions of detention. On 12 May 1995 she submitted a request to the Beijing police for permission to hold a demonstration against harassment she has been subjected to by the police and since then surveillance of her has reportedly intensified.

Another petition author and signatory, 75-year-old **Xu Liangying**, a well-known scientist, reported that his mail was being confiscated, his telephone monitored and police, backed by three vehicles, had begun round-the-clock surveillance outside his home four days ago.

Amnesty International considers all those who are currently detained to be prisoners of conscience.

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

- ◆ *the Chinese authorities to release immediately and unconditionally all those who have been detained in Beijing in advance of the anniversary of events on 4 June 1989 and expressing concern that they have been detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression;*
- ◆ *and expressing concern that others have been briefly detained and subjected to police harassment solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression;*

Please send appeals to:

President of the People's Republic of China

JIANG Zemin Guojia Zhuxi

Beijingshi

People's Republic of China

Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee

QIAO Shi Weiyuanzhang

Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui

Great Hall of the People

Beijingshi

People's Republic of China

Director of the Beijing Public Security Bureau

Zhang Liangji Juzhang

Gong'anju

19 Qianmen Dongdajie

Xuanwuqu

Beijingshi 100740

People's Republic of China

Telegram: Director of the Beijing

Public Security Bureau Zhang

Liangji, Beijing, China

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