

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 17/71/90

Distr: UA/SC

UA 485/90

Legal Concern

30 November 1990

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA:

Wang Juntao	Liu Xiaobo	Zhou Yongjun	Zhang Ming
Chen Ziming	Liu Suli	Ren Wanding	Zheng Xuguang

and others

Several dozen prominent political detainees are expected to be tried soon in Beijing for their role in last year's pro-democracy protests and may face heavy prison sentences after unfair trials behind closed doors. Amnesty International is concerned that they are arbitrarily detained for the peaceful exercise of fundamental human rights and that they are unlikely to receive fair and open trials, in accordance with international human rights standards.

Several of the detainees were charged only a few days ago with "counter-revolutionary" offences, after being held for over a year without charge. Their relatives were officially notified of the charges and expect them to go on trial very soon.

Among the detainees are Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming, two intellectuals who were castigated last year in the official press as "instigators" of the protests; Liu Xiaobo and Liu Suli, two university lecturers, and Zhou Yongjun, a student leader at the University of Politics and Law in Beijing. Ren Wanding, a human rights activist who was charged earlier this year, is also said to be among those due to go on trial shortly. He previously spent four years in prison for his activities in the 1979 democracy movement.

All have been charged with carrying out "counter-revolutionary propaganda and agitation", which carries a minimum sentence of 5 years' imprisonment in the case of the "ringleaders"; and two of them - Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming - have additionally been charged with "plotting to overthrow the government", a far more serious charge which carries penalties ranging from minimum 10 years' imprisonment to death.

Trial proceedings against two student leaders have already started in Beijing, according to foreign press correspondents there. The two are Zhang Ming, 25, from Beijing's Qinghua University, and Zheng Xuguang, 21, from Beijing's Aeronautics University. Both were on a government list of 21 "most wanted" students issued in June last year. They were charged with "counter-revolutionary" offences. Hearings of Zheng Xuguang's case are said to have begun last week and proceedings against Zhang Ming started on 27 November, but no verdicts have been announced.

According to sources in Beijing, prosecution also has started against 33 political detainees held at Qincheng prison, north of Beijing, including the two students now being tried. Among others who may soon face trial are 13 leaders of the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation who are being held in various detention centres in Beijing, and several intellectuals who until recently were detained without charge. They include Bao Zunxin, an academic who was recently reported to have attempted to commit suicide in prison (see UA 414/90 of 12 October 1990 - ASA 17/62/90); Chen Xiaoping, a lecturer at the University of Politics and Law; student leader Wang Dan; and Han Dongfang, leader of the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation who was charged with "counter-revolutionary" offences in March this year.

Amnesty International is calling on the government to make public the identities of all people now facing trial in relation to the protests, full details of the charges against them, and the dates and places of the hearings. It is also urging the government to ensure that the trials are open to the public and conducted in accordance with international standards for fair trial, and to allow international observers to the trials.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/faxes/airmail letters:

- expressing concern at reports that Zhang Ming and Zheng Xuguang are now being tried on "counter-revolutionary" charges, and that Wang Juntao, Chen Ziming, Liu Xiaobo, Liu Suli, Zhou Yongjun, Ren Wanding and several others have been charged with similar offences;
- urging the government to make public the identities of all political detainees now facing trial, full details of the charges against them, scheduled trial dates and the courts which will be conducting the proceedings;
- urging the government to ensure that the trials are open to the public and conducted in accordance with international standards for fair trial, and to allow international observers to attend the trials.

APPEALS TO:

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(Please forward to Cai Cheng Buzhang)

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