

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 17/87/95

UA 245/95

Hunger Strike / Health Concern /
Prisoners of Conscience

25 October 1995

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

OF CHINA Chen Ziming and Wang Zhiong, husband and wife

Chen Ziming, a 43-year-old prisoner of conscience suffering from cancer, began a hungerstrike in Beijing Prison No. 2 on 13 October 1995 in an attempt to persuade the authorities to provide him with proper medical care and to unblock his bank account to allow him to pay for his medical expenses. His wife, Wang Zhihong, was arrested on 22 October while holding a peaceful protest calling for medical treatment for her husband. The demonstration was held in Shuangxiu Park in Beijing; the parents of Chen Ziming also participated.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

After a closed trial in 1991, Chen Ziming was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment for "counter-revolutionary" activities and for allegedly masterminding the pro-democracy demonstrations of 4 June 1989. On 13 May 1994, Chen Ziming was released on medical parole, officially because of a "skin disease", after having served four years of imprisonment. However on further medical examination, he was found to be suffering from cancer, as well as skin, heart and liver ailments. Surgical treatment for the cancer was carried out in November 1994 and subsequently Chen was given radiotherapy while being held under virtual house arrest. After holding a one-day hungerstrike in protest at the arrests of dissidents during the run-up to the sixth anniversary of the 1989 pro-democracy protests, Chen Ziming was re-imprisoned on 25 June and his personal belongings were confiscated.

Since then, Chen Ziming's medical records have reportedly disappeared from the hospital where they were kept and, on 27 August 1995, his bank account was frozen by the Public Security Bureau, thereby denying him the means to pay for any necessary medical expenses. Restrictions have been placed on family visits and Chen Ziming's health continues to deteriorate.

Before her arrest in October, Wang Zhihong suffered a number of restrictions on her freedom of movement. She was recently ordered by the Chinese authorities to leave her home in Beijing and, for the duration of the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, she was held with her husband in Beijing Prison No. 2. She was released on 15 September 1995 after the Conference had ended (for further information, see Amnesty International AISA 17/84/95: *Harassment and Surveillance of the Families of Dissidents in China during the World Conference on Women*).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters in English, Chinese or in your own language:

- stating that the circumstances which led to Chen Ziming's decision to go on hungerstrike are of extreme concern, in particular that he is a prisoner of conscience, his health is deteriorating and he is being denied proper medical care;
- expressing concern that Wang Zhihong has been arrested for carrying out a peaceful demonstration, and urging that both Chen Ziming and his wife Wang Zhihong be released immediately and unconditionally;
- appealing for the freeze on Chen Ziming's bank account to be lifted to allow him to buy essential medical supplies.

APPEALS TO:

Premier of the People's Republic of China
Li Peng Zongli
Guowuyuan
9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie
Beijingshi 100032
People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPRC CN or 22478 MFERT CN
Telegram: Premier Li Peng, Beijing, China
Salutation: Your Excellency

Director of the Prison Administration Department (formerly the Reform-Through-Labour Administration) of the Ministry of Justice of the People's Republic of China

YAO Yunhai Juzhang

Maodong Gaizao Gongzuo Guanliju

14 Dongchang'anlu

Dongchengqu

Beijingshi 100741

People's Republic of China

Faxes: + 86 10 408 1046

Telegram: Director of the Reform-Through-Labour Administration of the Ministry of Justice, Beijing, China

Salutation: Dear Director

Minister of Public Health of the People's Republic of China

CHEN Minzhang Juzhang

Wzishengbu

44 Houhai Beigan, Gulou Xidajie

Beijingshi

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPRC CN (add: please forward to Public Health Minister Chen Minzhang)

Telegram: Minister of Public Security Chen Minzhang, Beijing, China

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of the People's Republic of China accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 December 1995.