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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 51/94

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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Colombia - 15 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 41/94

Burundi - 16 May - SEE NEWS SERVICE 36/94

**\*\*Annual Report - 7 July\*\*** - Please note: this year we will not be writing Regional Updates to go with the Annual Report media pack because of time constraints caused by restructuring. We will, however, be producing all the other usual media materials: News release; worldwide summary; worldwide statistics; regional summaries; and regional statistics. Paula is currently preparing a schedule for when these should reach you, which will be based on last year's schedule, and which will be sent out in the news service.

## TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Jordan - 22 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/94

Turkey -30 March - SEE NEWS SERVICES 46/94 AND 26/94

Hong Kong - 21 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 36/94

## FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Saudi Arabia - 10 May - More details to follow

News Service 51/94

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15 March 1994

#### CHINA: UPDATE ON RECENT ARRESTS

The detention and harassment of dissidents which started two weeks ago in China has continued over the past few days, with two more people being detained by police and others placed under surveillance or restricted. Three foreign journalists in Beijing were also held by police for several hours when they tried to contact a Chinese dissident.

On 11 March two human rights campaigners in Shanghai, Yang Zhou and Wang Fuchen, were detained by police. Yang Zhou, who had been detained for 24 hours one week earlier, was released on the morning of 12 March without explanation. Wang Fuchen remains in detention. Both he and Yang Zhou were leading members of a Shanghai-based Human Rights Association which unsuccessfully tried to apply for legal registration a year ago. There has been no further news about Wang Fuchen.

In Beijing, at least four foreign press correspondents were detained by police for a few hours between 11 and 13 March. Two of them were detained when they attempted to contact Liu Nianchun, one of the sponsors of a recent petition to the National People's Congress (NPC), China's parliament, that called for protection of workers' rights. The journalists were held for a few hours for interrogation then released. According to press reports, Liu Nianchun left his house on 11 March but did not return home that night. On 12 March, another foreign journalist who attempted to contact Liu was stopped by police outside his house. The journalist was detained by police for interrogation for five hours and had documents confiscated before being released. There has been no further news about Liu Nianchun.

Liu Nianchun was among a group of people who recently addressed a petition to the NPC reportedly supported by 120 people. The petition, based on a charter for a new organization, the League for the Protection of Working People, called for safeguards for the rights of working people in the face of inflation, rising unemployment and official corruption. Another main sponsor of the charter was said to be Yuan Hongbing, a law professor in Beijing who was arrested in early March and is believed to be still in detention.

Several other dissidents have reported that they have been under police surveillance, in some cases with uniformed police officers stationed outside their homes. Xu Liangying, a 74-year old dissident intellectual, is reported to have been under virtual house arrest for the past few days, with police officers posted at his door preventing anyone leaving or entering his home. He was one of seven intellectuals who addressed a petition, on 10 March, to the government calling for the release of political prisoners. Similar petitions or open letters were also issued by other dissidents.

The crackdown is believed to have been prompted by signs of renewed activities by dissidents as the NPC began its annual meeting last week. Several dissidents have addressed petitions to the NPC and other authorities during the past two weeks, that call for workers' rights and respect for human rights.

The most recent arrests in China on 11 March, coincided with the arrival of US Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Some dissidents briefly detained by police during the first week of March had been warned not to make statements during his visit.

Others still detained include Zhou Guoqiang, a lawyer, and Wang Jiaqi, a law student in Beijing. Their arrests and that of Yuan Hongbing was officially confirmed on 4 March. Zhai Weimin, a student detained on 6 March, was reportedly released on 7 or 8 March. There has been no news about Ma Shaofang, another student who went missing on 6 March and who, according to some sources, was detained on that date.

**Amnesty International is calling on the government for the immediate and unconditional release of Wang Fuchen, Zhou Guoqiang, Wang Jiaqi and Yuan Hongbing, unless they are to be charged, without delay, with recognizably criminal offenses in accordance with international standards.**

**Amnesty International is also calling on the government to clarify the situation of Ma Shaofang and Liu Nianchun, and if they are detained as reported, to release them or disclose the reason for their detention and their whereabouts.**

**ENDS/**