

PUBLIC

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Fear of torture/ill-health/ 5 August 2002  
death in custody/prisoners of conscience

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC Yang Jiahua (m), aged 54, peasant farmer  
OF CHINA + nine other farmers from Chongqing municipality  
Dead: Zeng Lingyun (m)

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Yang Jiahua, a peasant farmer from Dianjiang county in Chongqing municipality, is reportedly very ill in detention. He was detained for protesting against government corruption. He has reportedly been ill-treated in detention, and there are fears he is being denied medical care for his current illness.

Nine other farmers, arrested with Yang Jiahua, are also believed to remain in detention solely for the peaceful expression of their beliefs. Amnesty International believes they and Yang Jiahua are all prisoners of conscience.

Yang Jiahua is reportedly suffering from serious stomach pains as well as a skin disease. He has reportedly been vomiting frequently, and has a fever.

Yang Jiahua was arrested in August 1999 for calling for an end to corruption and excessive taxation in his area, and was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. Former prisoners held in jail with Yang Jiahua report that he was frequently beaten and ill-treated while in prison, where he was forced to wear heavy handcuffs and chains.

In June 1998, Yang Jiahua was among a group of 20 farmers who organized the "Chinese People's Workers and Farmers Anti-Corruption Army's Southwest Yangtze River Division" in Chongqing's Dianjiang county. The group held many rallies in the region protesting against corruption, calling for a reduction in the burdens on peasants and calling for a reversal of the government's verdict on the pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen square which called the events "counter-revolutionary".

Ten of them were detained when they passed out fliers in Chongqing on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tiananmen massacre on 4 June 1999. The whereabouts of some of those arrested remain unknown, although it is reported that most have been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

In a separate incident, Zeng Lingyun, from Longxing town, also in Chongqing municipality, has allegedly been shot and beaten to death while in police custody. He was reportedly detained on 26 July, apparently on suspicion of failing to register his motorcycle properly. His family was notified on 28 July that Zeng had died on the morning of 28 July. When they were allowed to see the body, his family reported that it was covered with bruising and blood and with what appeared to be a bullet hole in his head.

Conflicting accounts of the cause of Zeng Lingyun's death have since emerged. Zeng's sister, Linglan reportedly received a note from Longxing Police Substation on 28 July, informing them that Zeng Lingyun was shot dead at their police substation that morning. However, the head of Longxing police substation, Zhou Ping, has reportedly since stated that another police substation, at Tongjing, had taken Zeng away to investigate him for stealing pigeons and that Longxing police had been informed of Zeng's death by Tongjing police. Zhou Ping also alleged that the cause of death was uncertain and that an investigation was underway. There has been no official confirmation of this.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Social unrest in the countryside in China is growing as economic reforms continue and disparities between rich and poor become more marked. Social welfare systems have been weakened in recent years and excessive taxation and rampant corruption by local officials is a growing problem.

Many protests in the countryside - like those in the cities - have been put down with violence and many leaders or participants have been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. In some cases, the use of force has been greater in the countryside as the media spotlight is less intense. Reports of the abuse of power by local officials have been growing and are becoming more frequently reported in the Chinese media. However, in many cases it seems there is no proper investigation into complaints of torture or deaths by the local villagers.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- urging the authorities to ensure that Yang Jiahua is given immediate medical treatment, and calling for a guarantee that he will not be ill-treated in detention;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Yang Jiahua and the other nine farmers sentenced with him as Amnesty International believes they are being detained solely for the peaceful expression of their rights to freedom of expression and association;
- calling for an immediate and impartial investigation into the alleged death in custody of Zeng Lingyun and asking that any officials responsible for the beating and killing of Zeng be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to ensure that local officials in the countryside in China, and in this case, in Chongqing municipality, are strictly regulated and any abuses of power are investigated.

**APPEALS TO:**

***Mayor of Chongqing  
Bao Xuding  
c/o Chongqing People's Government  
232 Renmin Lu  
Yu Zhong District  
Chongqing Shi  
400015  
People's Republic of China  
Telegram: Mayor, Chongqing People's Government, Chongqing Shi,  
China  
Email: cqgov@cq.gov.cn  
Salutation: Dear Mayor***

***Director, Chongqing People's Government Foreign Affairs Office  
33 4<sup>th</sup> New Road  
Yu Zhong Qu  
Chongqing Shi  
400015  
People's Republic of China  
Telegram: Director, Foreign Affairs Office, Chongqing People's  
Government, Chongqing Shi, China  
Email: zidonghua@cq.gov.cn  
Salutation: Dear Director***

***Head of Dianjiang County People's Government  
Nannei Jie***

**Dianjiang County  
Chongqing shi  
People's Republic of China  
Telegrams: Dianjiang County People's Government, Dianjiang County,  
Chongqing Shi, China  
Salutation: Dear County Chair**

**Copies to:**

**China's Central TV, Beijing  
E-mail: [webmaster@mail.cctv.com](mailto:webmaster@mail.cctv.com) / [michael@nic.cctv.com](mailto:michael@nic.cctv.com)**

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**and 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 16  
September 2002.**