

ACTION PAGE

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Fifteen years after the PRC government was harshly rebuked by the international community for its brutal crackdown on student-led democracy demonstrations culminating in the June 4th Massacre, the government continues to carry out repressive measures against those seeking a democratic and free society.

APPEAL FOR IMPRISONED ACTIVISTS

Zhang Ming, 39, featured in this issue's Prisoner Profile, was one of the 21 student leaders of the 1989 democracy protests included on the government's 'most wanted' list. He was previously sentenced to three years in prison in relation to his 1989 activities. Zhang was arrested again on September 9, 2002 for "endangering public safety" on allegations of plotting to blow up a building. However, on October 16, 2002 he was indicted on an amended charge of "abuse of executive benefits" in connection with his Shanghai-based company. Zhang was sentenced to seven years in prison by the Shanghai Intermediate People's Court on September 9, 2003. Sources in China believe the motive for Zhang's arrest was his refusal to recant his political principles or express regret for his previous actions. Sources say that Zhang has been subjected to constant physical abuse by officials since his detention. Zhang was reportedly in critical condition after a five-month hunger strike at Shanghai Tilanqiao Prison left him 50 pounds lighter.

Yang Jianli, 40, who has previously been featured in the *China Rights Forum* Action Page and Prisoner Profile, is a Chinese-born permanent resident of the U.S. who established the Foundation for China in the 21st Century in 1990. Yang briefly participated in the protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989 before coming to the U.S., and was subsequently included on a police blacklist of 49 Chinese activists living overseas. Yang attempted to reenter China in April 2002 to investigate labor protests in Liaoyang, but was detained in Kunming, Yunnan Province on April 26, 2002 when he was discovered to be using a borrowed passport. On June 21, 2002 the Beijing Public Security Bureau formally arrested Yang and informed his family that Yang had been held in Beijing since June 2, 2002. Yang was indicted by the Beijing People's Procuratorate on July 17, 2003 on charges of "espionage" and "illegally entering China," and was tried at the Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People's Court on August 4, 2003. It was not until May 13 that Yang was finally sentenced to five years in prison.

Gong Shenliang, founder of the banned South China Church, was arrested in August 2001 and sentenced to death on December 29, 2001 on charges of "using a cult to undermine implementation of the law," "intentional assault" and rape. The cult charges were dropped and the death sentence was commuted to life in prison on retrial in October 2002 after international pressure. Four women who originally testified against Gong subsequently said they had been tortured into signing fabricated statements accusing him of assault. Gong is imprisoned at the Hongshan Prison in Wuhan, Hubei Province, where he is said to have been subjected to serious physical abuse. After a visit to the prison, his family reported that Gong was suffering internal bleeding and hearing loss from the beatings and other mistreatment. Guards at the prison denied the allegations and said Gong 'fell.' During that visit, Gong asked his family to secure his transfer to another prison because he feared for his life.

Please join the international community in calling for the immediate and unconditional release of these and other democracy and religious activists. Please send letters to the designated addresses below, emphasizing the need for the rule of law, free flow of information and the right to exercise freedom of expression, religion and assembly. Where necessary, express concern for medical conditions and demand immediate and appropriate treatment.

Zhang Ming: held at Shanghai Tilanqiao Prison

Mayor Han Zheng

Shanghai Municipal People's Government
Shanghai Renmin Zhengfu, 30 Fuzhoulu
Shanghai 200002, PRC

Yang Jianli: held at the Beijing Public Security Bureau Detention Center

Governor Wang Qishan

Beijing Municipal People's Government
Beijingshi Renmin Zhengfu 2 Zhengyilu,
Dongchengqu
Beijing 100744, PRC

Gong Shenliang: held at Hongshan Prison, Miaoshan Development Zone

Governor Luo Qingquan

Hubei Provincial People's Government
Hunansheng Renmin Zhengfu 7
Wuyizhonglu Changshashi
Hunan Sheng, PRC

In addition, send copies of letters expressing medical concern to: Chinese Medical Association; 42 Dongsi Xidajie, Beijing 100710, PRC
Fax: 86-10-6512-3754; email: cmafrd@public3.bta.net.cn

Send copies of above appeals to:

President Hu Jintao

Chinese Communist Party
Yongdingmenjie
Beijing 100032, PRC

Prime Minister Wen Jiabao

Guowuyuan
9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie
Beijing 100032, PRC

National People's Congress

Quanguo Renmin Dahuitang
19 Xijiaominxiang, Xichengqu
Beijing 100805, PRC