

URGENT APPEAL –THE OBSERVATORY

CHN 003 / 0704 / OBS 056
Arbitrary Detention
People's Republic of China
July 12, 2004

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint program of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in China.

Brief description of the situation:

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders has been informed by Human Rights in China (HRIC) of the detention of Zhang Youren, the leader of a farmers group in Tangshan, Hebei Province, that has been protesting the terms of their forced relocation.

According to the information received, public security police arrived at Zhang's home around 10 a.m. on July 6 and instructed him to pack his diabetes medication before taking him away – an indication that he would be held in custody for a period of time. After detaining Zhang Youren, police conducted a search of his home. When Zhang's wife, Wang Yushu, and his son, Zhang Guodong, declined to cooperate fully with the search, police officers reportedly beat Wang and forcibly removed her to the local police station.

The Observatory fears that Zhang's detention is related to a visit to Tangshan by Premier Wen Jiabao scheduled for July 8-10. The relocated farmers had been planning to petition Wen Jiabao to intervene in their case, and the arrest of their leader, Zhang Youren, is seen as an attempt to forestall any such action. Another peasant leader, Li Tie, anticipating similar treatment, has fled the city.

The members of the farmers group are among some 40,000 people forced to leave their farms in the 1990s to make way for Henan's Taolinkou reservoir. The group claims that Tangshan Municipal Party Secretary Zhang He misappropriated funds set aside to compensate displaced residents, and after exhausting official avenues of recourse they have resorted to protests. On April 1, 2000 more than 100 people were injured in a clash with police while attempting to appeal to the provincial government in Shijiazhuang for help; on the same occasion at least four protesters were arrested and sentenced to prison terms of three to five years. Zhang Youren has become the most recent focus of official attention and harassment, culminating in his house arrest on July 1.

Action requested:

Please write to the authorities of China, urging them to:

- i. release immediately and unconditionally Zhang Youren and guarantee his physical and psychological integrity in all circumstances;
- ii. conform with the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly on 9 December 1998, in particular its article 1, which states that " everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels" and article 12.2 which provides that "the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually or in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.";
- iii. conform with the provisions of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and with the other international instruments binding China.

Addresses:

President Hu Jintao, People's Republic of China, c/o Embassy of the People's Republic of China; 2300 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C., 20008, USA, Fax: +01 202 588-0032

President Hu Jintao, People's Republic of China, c/o Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China, Chemin de Surville 11, Case postale 85, 1213 Petit-Lancy 2, Genève, Suisse, Fax: +4122 7937014, E-mail: mission.china@ties.itu.int

Minister of Justice of the People's Republic of China, Zhang Fusen Buzhang, Sifabu, 10 Chaoyangmen Nandajie, Chaoyangqu, Beijingshi 100020, People's Republic of China, Fax: +86 10 65 292345

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Li Zhaoxing Buzhang Waijiaobu, 2 Chaoyangmen Nandajie, Beijingshi 100701, People's Republic of China, Fax: +86 10 6588 2594, Email: ipc@fmprc.gov.cn

Ambassadeur, Sha Zukang, Mission permanente de la Rép. Pop. De Chine, Ch. De Surville, CP 85, 1213 Petit-Lancy 2, Suisse, e-mail: mission.china@ties.itu.int, Fax : +4122 793.70.14

Paris, Geneva, July 12, 2004

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory, a joint FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders, and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need.

To contact the Observatory, call the Emergency Line:

E-mail: observatoire@iprolink.ch

Tel and Fax: FIDH: +33 (0) 1 43 55 25 18 / 01 43 55 18 80

OMCT: +41 22 809 49 39 / 41 22 809 49 29