

AI News: April 1996

News

Bahrain

Hundreds arrested as protests flare up

Hundreds of people in Bahrain were arrested following protests in January 1996. They included school children as young as seven who were held for a few days and then released. The majority of those arrested were held in incommunicado detention and were at risk of being tortured. This latest wave of detentions demonstrated the government's continued disregard for the rights of political prisoners and possible prisoners of conscience. Those held included nine prominent Muslim Shi'a clerics and political opposition leaders.

Clashes with security forces erupted when demonstrators protested against the closure of mosques, in late 1995 and January 1996, where prominent Shi'a clerics had been calling on the government to restore the Constitution and parliament, dissolved in 1975. Mass arrests followed. Many more were detained in the wake of bombings at two luxury hotels in Manama on 17 January and 11 February; three people were wounded in the February blast. The security forces have continued to arrest people, especially in Shi'a villages, after opposition groups vowed to escalate their protests with the end of the month of Ramadan on February 19.

The government puts the total number of people detained since January 1996 at about 260, but opposition sources and lawyers say that some 2,000 people were arrested, most of them taken from their homes, often in dawn raids, or from street check-points. Most of the detainees had no access to families or lawyers. In some cases, family members were held hostage to coerce relatives to turn themselves in. AI believes many of those in detention may be prisoners of conscience.

Unrest resumed in November 1995 after a seven-month lull with peaceful demonstrations against the continued detention of up to 600 people arrested between December 1994 and April 1995. During 1995 dozens of detainees were reported to have been tortured or ill-treated in custody, and two people died. Some of those detained had been calling for the restoration of parliament, and are facing unfair trials before the State Security Court.

The nine clerics and leaders were detained during last year's unrest and held without charge or trial until their release in September 1995. They were rearrested in January 1996. They included Shaikh 'Abd al-Amir Mansur al-Jamri, a prominent Shi'a Muslim and religious scholar and a member of the former National Assembly. The government said that it would try them for "instigating and organizing violence". Shaikh al-Jamri and two of the other detainees, Hassan Meshema'a and Abdul Wahab Hussein, went on hunger-strike at the end of January and were briefly moved to the military hospital in Manama. They have reportedly been moved back to the main al-Qal'a prison.

In a letter to the government, AI

has called for the immediate and unconditional release of all those held solely for the non-violent expression of their beliefs. The organization has also requested information about political detainees, including details of the charges against them, and sought assurances that they are given prompt trials in accordance with international standards. It has also asked for assurances that all those detained are treated humanely and are allowed access to families, lawyers, and medical attention if necessary. AI has repeatedly sought permission from the government for a fact-finding mission to visit the country and for government talks, but has still received no positive answer.

Senegal

Widespread use of torture persists with impunity while human rights abuses continue in Casamance. In spite of official denials, torture is still widespread in Senegal and seems to be officially tolerated, at least at a certain level within the hierarchy. Torture of both criminal and political detainees in police custody is common and those responsible are rarely brought to justice.

In Casamance, a region in the south of the country where Senegalese security forces are fighting armed separatists — members of the Movement of Casamance's Democratic Forces (MFDC) — large-scale human rights violations have been taking place since the resumption of the fighting in January 1995. Many unarmed civilians suspected of being MFDC supporters are being held without trial, tortured, extrajudicially executed or have “disappeared” after being arrested in their homes or during roadside security checks in Casamance. Some of those held appear to be prisoners of conscience, arrested with no evidence of their individual participation in acts of violence.

Abuses have also been committed by the MFDC against unarmed civilians suspected of collaborating with the Senegalese authorities. Villagers who have refused to pay a ransom to the rebels have been beaten, and some have been killed.

Senegal has ratified almost every international instrument relating to the defence of human rights and yet violations are being committed with impunity. AI is calling on the authorities to release immediately and unconditionally all the prisoners held in the context of the conflict in Casamance, where there is no evidence of their individual participation in acts of violence, and to take urgent measures to improve the human rights situation in the country.

See Senegal: Widespread use of torture persists with impunity, while human rights abuses also continue in Casamance

(AI Index: AFR 49/01/96).

Israel and the occupied territories, including areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority
AI's Secretary General Pierre Sané led a delegation to Israel and the Occupied Territories and the Palestinian Authority areas in mid-February. Delegates met Israeli government officials and President Arafat, AI members, and Israeli and Palestinian NGOs, and held talks with Israeli and Palestinian members of parliament. They also met staff and students at universities in Bir Zeit, Nablus and Tel Aviv and attended a human rights education class in a school in Rafah, Gaza, and at a secondary school in Tel Aviv. Human rights education is a primary focus of AI members' work in the Middle East region in keeping with AI's aim to use it as a preventative measure to reduce human rights violations. During the visit, the Israeli Minister of Justice announced the postponement, pending further discussion, of a controversial bill which would, if passed, have legalized torture.

papua new guinea

Executions may resume after more than 40 years

Executions may be about to resume in Papua New Guinea. Charles Ombusu, a young man convicted of wilful murder and rape, was sentenced to death in February 1995. At the time of going to press, an appeal against the conviction was before the Supreme Court and a decision was expected in late February. The last execution in Papua New Guinea was carried out in 1954.

The death penalty for wilful murder was re-introduced in Papua New Guinea in 1991, in response to public anger over an increase in violent crime, and to pressure from major foreign investors. The decision by Parliament did not take into account strong opposition to the death penalty from prominent figures within the country. Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan is among those who have publicly expressed opposition to the death penalty.

AI opposes the death penalty in all cases on the grounds that it is a violation of the right to life, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and that it is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. The organization is particularly concerned that the Papua New Guinea law does not provide sufficient guarantees to ensure that juvenile offenders will not be at risk of execution. AI is calling on the government to commute all death sentences with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

See: Papua New Guinea: The

Death Penalty — not the Solution

(AI Index: ASA 34/01/96).

Turkey

MAHMUT KAÇAR, a post office worker, was detained in Ankara on 10 November 1994 when he interrupted the annual memorial ceremony for Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic. Mahmut Kaçar had approached President Süleyman Demirel and his ministers holding up the Koran and saying, "I call you to the Koran... Turn to God."

On 14 February 1995 Ankara Criminal Court sentenced Mahmut Kaçar to four and a half years' imprisonment for "insulting the founder of the Republic". The sentence was upheld by the Appeal Court on 17 April 1995. Mahmut Kaçar is serving his sentence in Kir^oehir prison. Mahmut Kaçar had been interrogated by police for 12 days — far beyond the maximum limit laid down in the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code for this "offence". His words contained no advocacy of violence and AI considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

At his trial, Mahmut Kaçar alleged that he had been tortured in detention in Ankara by being sprayed with cold pressurized water and having electric shocks applied to his feet.

+Please write, asking for the immediate and unconditional release of Mahmut Kaçar, to: President Süleyman Demirel/ Cumhurbaşbakanligi/ 06100 Ankara/ Turkey.

LIBYA

Lawyer Jum'a 'Ateyqa has been arbitrarily detained since 1990. He was arrested in March or April 1990 and tried before a criminal court in Tripoli, in connection with the murder of a Libyan diplomat in Rome, Italy, in January 1985. The court acquitted him. Since then he has been illegally detained in Abu Salim Prison, in Tripoli. Jum'a 'Ateyqa reportedly suffers from ill-health, including liver problems. He is diabetic.

Jum'a 'Ateyqa, who is married with children, was first arrested in 1973 and spent eight months in prison, allegedly on suspicion that he was a member of an illegal left-wing opposition group. Following his release he practised as a lawyer and defended a number of political prisoners. He left Libya in 1978 and went to Italy for post-graduate studies. There he reportedly joined a Libyan opposition group, the National Democratic Movement.

Later he moved to Morocco and then to Iraq until 1988 when, following a general amnesty, he returned with his family to Libya. A number of former opposition activists also went back to Libya. Some of those who had lived in Italy were later arrested in connection with the murder of the Libyan diplomat. They were reportedly tortured during interrogation and stated that Jum'a 'Ateyqa had been involved. However, the criminal court acquitted him because of lack of evidence.

+Please write, calling for the release of Jum'a 'Ateyqa, to: Colonel Mu'ammarr al-Gaddafi/ Leader of the Revolution/ Office of the Leader of the Revolution/ Tripoli/ Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mexico

AURORA NAZARIO ARRIETA is 15 years old. On 2 November 1995, she was raped by three police officers near her home in Cuetzalan in the state of Puebla.

Aurora Nazario, a member of the Nahuatl indigenous community of San Miguel Tzinacapan, was walking past the town's police station when four police officers, including the Police Commander, dragged her inside. They told her to get undressed and when she refused one of the officers forcefully undressed her. Then they drenched her with water and took her to a cell, where she was raped by three of the officers, including the Police Commander. The fourth stood guard outside. She suffered multiple bruising and lacerations. Afterwards, Aurora Nazario was threatened with death and retaliation against her family if she told anyone what had happened. She was then allowed to go.

Later that evening, the woman for whom Aurora Nazario worked as a housemaid presented a complaint before the public ministry official in Cuetzalan, and the rape was certified by a doctor. On 3 November the three officers offered Aurora Nazario's family money to withdraw the allegations. Despite the officers still being in town on 3 November, they were not arrested. They remain at large but their whereabouts are unknown.

+Please write, demanding the protection of Aurora Nazario Arrieta and her family and a full investigation into the allegations of rape by the three police officers, to: Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León/ President of Mexico/ Palacio Nacional/ 06067 México DF/ Mexico.

Kenya

Update

After intense international pressure, Koigi wa Wamwere, Charles Kuria Wamwere and G.G. Njuguna Ngengi were taken out of solitary confinement in February 1996. They have also had their medically prescribed diets restored. They were featured as a Worldwide Appeal case in March 1996. Please continue to call for their immediate and unconditional release as prisoners of conscience.

honduras

Struggle against impunity prevails against the odds

The struggle against impunity in Honduras is making progress in spite of strong opposition from those allegedly responsible for past human rights violations, and in the face of serious set-backs.

In July 1995 the country's Special Prosecutor for Human Rights took the unprecedented step of charging 10 military officers for human rights violations committed in the early 1980s. Faced with charges of unlawful arrest and attempted murder, for the "temporary disappearance" of six students in 1982, the military argued that they were protected by amnesty laws approved by the National Congress — a claim strongly opposed by human rights organizations and other professional bodies. Arrest warrants were issued against three of the 10 officers in October 1995, but they went into hiding, allegedly helped by fellow military personnel. On 5 January 1996 the Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the officers' claim regarding the amnesty laws, to the dismay of human rights organizations, Church bodies and relatives of the victims. This decision, however, was unanimously overturned by the Supreme Court of Justice on 19 January 1996, which found that the Court of Appeal had overstepped its bounds of jurisdiction.

During 1995 there were further exhumations of remains of victims of "disappearances" in the 1980s. By the end of the year, seven bodies had been exhumed. Once the remains have been definitely identified, procedures against those suspected of being responsible for the deaths will begin.

As a result of their work to bring to justice those allegedly responsible for past human rights violations, members of local human rights organizations, the Commissioner for Human Rights, Leo Valladares, and the judge hearing the case, Roy Edmundo Medina, have received death threats. Shots were fired at the court where the proceedings were taking place.

AI continues to urge the authorities to pursue the investigations into past human rights violations with vigour and to bring those alleged to be responsible promptly before the courts so that justice can be done. The organization is also reiterating its calls for appropriate protection for all those involved in bringing to light the abuses committed by the military in the past.

germany

Detainees allege ill-treatment by police officers

Numerous allegations that police officers, and in some cases prison officials, have used excessive or unwarranted force in arresting or restraining people, and have subjected detainees in their custody to

cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, have continued to be received by AI. In the majority of cases, the victims were foreign nationals and there is evidence that in some cases the alleged ill-treatment was racially motivated. Victims have suffered bruises, cuts and fractures. In one case, that of Binyamin Safek, AI believes the ill-treatment allegedly inflicted amounts to torture.

According to a criminal complaint submitted to the Frankfurt authorities, Binyamin Safek, a Turkish national born in Germany, and his companion, stopped their car in front of a hot-dog stand in Frankfurt at about 8.45pm on 10 April 1995. Two police officers drew up in a vehicle and told them they couldn't park there. When Binyamin Safek said that they would only be a couple of minutes, one of the officers replied, "Drive off, you wog". Binyamin Safek complained about the officer's use of racist language and was told to get out of the car. Once out of the car he was pushed to the ground and handcuffed.

Binyamin Safek was taken to the police station. He said that for an hour he was punched and kicked in the face, chest, head and arms. Binyamin Safek's companion telephoned his friend's parents who arrived at the station looking for their son. They were told he was not there. At 9.45pm they found him in the street. Binyamin Safek was hospitalised for a week.

Binyamin Safek is the subject of an investigation for resisting state authority.

AI has written to the German authorities about this and the many other allegations it received between April 1995 and January 1996 asking that investigations be conducted promptly and impartially.

See Federal Republic of Germany:

The alleged ill-treatment of foreigners —
an update to the May 1995 report
(AI Index: EUR 23/02/96).

AI News: April 1996

Focus

China

Living in the shadow of repression

A fifth of the world's people are ruled by a government that treats fundamental human rights with contempt. Despite the dramatic economic changes in China in the past decade, human rights violations continue on a massive scale. Many of the abuses result from official policies and repressive legislation. Others are committed in breach of Chinese law itself as officials exercise their power arbitrarily and, often, with impunity.

Dissent and any activity perceived as a threat to the established political order are ruthlessly suppressed. Thousands of political dissidents, human rights defenders and members of religious or ethnic groups are in jail, many simply for expressing their beliefs. Hundreds of thousands of people — possibly many more — are administratively detained, many in forced labour camps, without ever having been charged with a crime.

Torture remains endemic, causing many deaths each year. The death penalty is used extensively and arbitrarily to instil fear. More people are executed every year in China than in all other countries of the world combined. Social programs such as the birth control policy are administered in ways that allow for ill-treatment.

In several regions, home to some of China's many national minorities, people who try to express national, cultural or religious beliefs that are perceived as threatening to the state face repressive measures and brutal treatment by state officials.

China's economic modernization program has had little impact on the country's formal political structures. The government is still monopolized by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The National People's Congress, the country's legislature, still has little power, and the judiciary remains under the

influence of the CCP. Despite some new laws aimed at redressing human rights violations, there is no sign of any fundamental change in the official human rights policy or in aspects of the legal system which foster abuses.

China's increasing openness to the world through trade has not been matched by international cooperation on human rights. The government maintains that human rights are largely a matter of state sovereignty, arguing that no one has the right to interfere in its internal affairs. It rejects the vital principle, established by international law and the practice of all states working collectively in the United Nations (UN) that the promotion and protection of human rights are matters of international concern.

The world cannot ignore what is happening to a fifth of its people. The international community must insist that the Chinese Government takes urgent steps to protect the fundamental human rights of all China's citizens.

Death penalty

Thousands of people in China are sentenced to death every year — more than in all the other countries of the world combined. The Chinese authorities use the death penalty extensively to create fear. In many cases the death penalty is applied arbitrarily and with no safeguards against miscarriages of justice.

China has continued to widen the scope of the death penalty. Today, an estimated 68 offences are punishable by death and increasing numbers of people are being executed for non-violent offences. In 1994, two peasants were put to death in Henan province for stealing 36 cows and agricultural machinery worth US\$9,300.

Defendants can be tried without the help of a lawyer and without knowing the accusations they face until they reach court. Verdicts are frequently decided before trial. Some people are condemned solely on the basis of confessions, which may have been extracted under torture. Executions can take place within a few days of sentencing and appeals rarely succeed. Prisoners condemned to death suffer cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment — they are shackled from the time they are sentenced until they are executed. Some executions happen in public. Most take place at discreet execution grounds after the condemned prisoners have been paraded at mass rallies or driven through the streets on the back of lorries.

Torture

Torture is endemic in China. It is used against political and common criminal prisoners alike.

The most common forms of torture include severe beatings, whipping, kicking, the use of electric batons that give powerful shocks, the prolonged use of handcuffs or leg-irons in ways that cause intense pain, and suspension by the arms, often combined with beatings.

Criminal suspects are frequently tortured to make them "confess". Four girls aged under 16 and two young men were tortured in early 1995 in Fuxin, Liaoning province, by a Public Security section chief intent on making them "confess" to "hooliganism and promiscuous behaviour". They were repeatedly hit and given shocks with an electric baton.

Abuse of power

Yan Zhengxue is a 50-year-old painter and former deputy of a local People's Congress in Zhejiang province. On 2 July 1993 a seemingly innocuous row with a bus conductor in Beijing threw him into a world of rampant abuse of power by officials.

The conductor called the police, who took Yan Zhengxue to Haidian district police station. There, three policemen beat him mercilessly without a word of explanation. Late that night he was thrown out onto the street, barely able to move. A passer-by took him to hospital, where he was treated for multiple bruising and cuts.

He filed a suit against his attackers with the local court. Eventually, with the help of a vigorous public campaign, one of his torturers was tried in April 1994 and sentenced to a suspended one-year prison term and ordered to pay compensation.

A few days later Yan Zhengxue was arrested on a trumped-up accusation of having stolen a bicycle in 1993. He was sentenced in April 1994, without charge or trial, to two years of “re-education through labour”. Today, Yan Zhengxue is in a forced labour camp, while his torturers remain free. Forced labour and “acknowledgement of guilt” are fundamental elements of China’s penal policy. These often lead to ill-treatment of prisoners. Often the perpetrators are “trustees” — prisoners entrusted by officials to supervise other prisoners. Tong Yi, a political prisoner, was repeatedly beaten by two “trustees” at the Hewan labour camp in Wuhan, Hubei province, in early 1995 after she complained about long hours of work. After she complained to the camp officials about the beating, she was beaten again more than 10 times by women prisoners.

The Chinese authorities have created swathes of repressive legislation under which political dissidents, human rights defenders, members of religious and ethnic groups and many others are detained or intimidated. When these laws do not suffice, officials often use other aspects of the law to achieve the same ends.

In most political cases, trials are a mere formality and defendants are condemned before reaching court. In such cases, the verdict and sentence are decided by political authorities outside the court. In all trials, defence rights are severely curtailed.

Wei Jingsheng, an outspoken critic of the government, was arrested in early April 1994. He was held without charge for nearly 20 months. He was detained for expressing his views about political and human rights issues, and for having contacts with foreign nationals. He was charged on 21 November 1995 with “plotting to overthrow the government” and sentenced three weeks later to 14 years’ imprisonment, after a trial which was closed to independent observers. Jailed previously as a prisoner of conscience, he had been released on parole in September 1993 after spending more than 14 years in jail.

Political dissidents

In June 1989 the Chinese authorities sent tanks and troops to “clear” Tiananmen Square in Beijing and crush a popular pro-democracy movement. Many people were killed. In the crack-down that followed, hundreds of people were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for “counter-revolutionary” offences. They are among thousands of other prisoners who have been jailed in the past decade for advocating political reforms or forming small political groups. Since 1994 many people who tried to bring about changes within the narrow confines of the law have also been arbitrarily detained.

labour activists

In China workers are permitted to join only one trade union, the official All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). Those who have attempted to organize independent labour groups have been imprisoned or detained without charge.

During the 1989 pro-democracy movement, groups of workers in various cities formed Workers Autonomous Federations as an alternative to the ACFTU. These were quickly banned after the 4 June 1989 crack-down and their organizers arrested and prosecuted on “counter-revolutionary” charges. Since then, other labour activists have also been detained.

Human rights defenders

Human rights defenders meet with the same ruthless treatment. Ren Wandong was detained in Beijing in 1989. A veteran human rights campaigner, he is one of many human rights defenders who have bravely tried to speak out. He was sentenced in 1991 to seven years’ imprisonment for “carrying out

counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement". This was based on his calls for respect for human rights, free speech and the rule of law. At least eight people who attempted to register a Human Rights Association in Shanghai were arrested in 1994. Some were sentenced to terms of "re-education through labour" without being charged or tried. Many people in Tibet have been harassed or jailed for collecting or circulating information about human rights.

Between March and May 1995, several groups of people in Beijing, including well-known intellectuals and former prisoners of conscience, signed numerous petitions to the authorities calling for more democracy and human rights reforms. More than 50 of them were detained, mainly in Beijing. Some were released after interrogation but at least 10 were reported to be still held without charge in September 1995. Those released were placed under surveillance and some were told to leave Beijing.

Religious groups

Religious freedom is also restricted in China. Repression of unauthorized religious activities has intensified in the past two years. Many peaceful but unregistered religious gatherings have been raided by police, and those attending have been beaten, threatened and detained. Thirty Roman Catholics were arrested in Jiangxi province in April 1995 in connection with their Easter Sunday Mass celebrations on Yi Jia Shan mountain in Chongren county. Some were later imprisoned, including an 18-year-old woman, Rao Yanping, who was sentenced to four years in prison.

In China's many diverse regions, members of ethnic groups live under the shadow of repressive laws and regulations which deny them the right to express peacefully their national, religious or cultural aspirations.

Thousands of people in Tibet have been arbitrarily detained and many have been tortured since a resurgence of demonstrations in favour of Tibetan independence began in September 1987. Dozens of demonstrators have been shot dead by security forces. Others have been imprisoned for peaceful activities such as chanting slogans, displaying the Tibetan national flag and distributing pro-independence leaflets. Many children and juveniles have been jailed and tortured.

Phuntsog Nyidron, a 28-year-old nun from Michungri Nunnery, was originally sentenced in 1989 to nine years in prison for staging a short and peaceful pro-independence demonstration in Lhasa. Her sentence was later increased to 17 years for recording nationalist songs in prison.

In 1995 many monasteries and nunneries in Tibet were raided by police following protests against new restrictions on religious freedom. By early 1995 at least 650 Tibetan political detainees were being held, most of them monks and nuns detained solely for their peaceful expression of support for Tibetan independence.

Regional repression

People in several other regions have been victim of serious human rights violations in connection with demands for political independence or respect of cultural identity. In Baren, a Uighur rural county in eastern Xinjiang, weeks of protests culminated in violent clashes in April 1990 between the security forces and Uighurs who had gathered in a mosque. Several people were killed. A severe crack-down followed, with several thousand people reportedly arrested across the region. Many were tortured. Three were later sentenced to death and executed.

Birth control policy

Many people, especially women, have also suffered violations of their most fundamental human rights as a result of China's birth control policy. Birth control has been compulsory since 1979 and a quota system is enforced. Some women who become pregnant outside the plan have been abducted and forced to have abortions or undergo sterilization. "Above-quota" new-born babies have reportedly been killed by doctors under pressure from officials and some couples who have refused to obey the child quotas have had their homes demolished. Relatives of those who could not pay fines imposed for

having had too many children have been held hostage until the money was paid. Those helping families to have “above-quota” children have been severely punished.

An unmarried woman in Hebei province who had adopted one of her brother’s children was detained several times in an attempt to force her brother to pay fines for having had too many children. In November 1994 she was held for seven days with a dozen other men and women. She was reportedly blindfolded, stripped naked, tied and beaten with an electric baton.

The Chinese Government has shown that it is sensitive to world opinion. All too often, however, those with most contact with Chinese leaders — foreign governments and businesses — have chosen to ignore human rights issues.

In international forums such as the UN, governments have buckled under political pressure and refrained from criticizing China. The UN Commission on Human Rights has failed to pass a single resolution condemning the massacre of civilians during the 1989 crack-down or the many subsequent and well-documented human rights violations.

The Chinese Government has time and again tried to deflect criticism and avoid scrutiny of its human rights record. It says it recognizes the universality of UN human rights standards. Yet it also consistently argues that states must be free to implement these standards according to their specific cultural, historical and political circumstances.

China is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. As such it has considerable influence and is responsible for upholding international human rights norms. If China is to assume its full responsibilities in the international community, it must accept the greater accountability and openness that come with that membership.

The international community must also live up to its responsibilities. The world’s governments, regional organizations such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and China’s trading partners all have the means to exert sustained pressure on the Chinese authorities to respect human rights. So far they have shown neither the will nor the vision to do so.

Businesses dealing with China can help by ensuring that their working practices in China set an example to others by respecting the fundamental human rights of their employees, particularly the right to freedom of information and association; by helping to put pressure on the Chinese authorities whenever possible to introduce safeguards to protect human rights and end the arbitrary exercise of power by officials; and by raising awareness about basic international human rights standards by distributing human rights information, promoting business codes of ethics and supporting human rights education initiatives.

Recommendations

To the Chinese Government:

- Establish a national commission of inquiry to review thoroughly the circumstances in which human rights violations occur and the legal and other remedies needed to eradicate them.
- End impunity by ensuring that all human rights violations are thoroughly, promptly and impartially investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.
- Stop and prevent torture by introducing safeguards for prisoners’ rights and prohibiting all acts of torture and ill-treatment.
- End arbitrary detention and imprisonment by releasing immediately and unconditionally all prisoners of conscience.
- Ensure fair trials according to international standards.
- Stop the use of the death penalty.
- Stop abuses resulting from the birth control policy.
- Take measures to protect human rights defenders.
- Ratify international human rights treaties and cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms.

To the international community and all those with contacts in China:

- Encourage the Chinese Government to ratify international human rights treaties and to invite UN human rights experts and relevant human rights organizations to visit China to investigate human rights.
- Whenever possible open up dialogue with the Chinese authorities on human rights issues and exert pressure on them to conform to international human rights norms.
- Use every opportunity when developing cultural or economic links with Chinese people to create a common understanding of human rights.
- Ensure that no security equipment is transferred to China where there is reason to believe that such equipment will contribute to arbitrary detentions, torture or ill-treatment.