

PUBLIC

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UA 240/07 **Fear of torture or ill-treatment**

CHINA **Yang Chunlin (m), aged 52, human rights activist**

Human rights activist Yang Chunlin was detained on 6 July in the north-eastern province of Heilongjiang, and charged with "subversion of state power" on 23 August. He is now held at Heitong Police Station in Jiamusi City; he has been held incommunicado since he was detained, putting him at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

He was detained at his home by six policemen, who confiscated two computers and a printer. His family went repeatedly to Heitong police station to ask where he was, but were only told that he was in custody on 13 August. Police told the family that the main reason for his arrest was his involvement in collecting signatures for a petition titled "We Want Human Rights, not the Olympics" in villages where he had been helping farmers whose land was taken away from them without adequate compensation. The petition has reportedly been signed by more than 10,000 people, mostly the Heilongjiang farmers who had lost their land.

On 3 September Yang's two lawyers arrived at the police station and asked to see him. The police refused, saying that as Yang Chunlin's crime was a serious one relating to the state he had no right to see his lawyers. The police harassed the lawyers, threatening to have the local Judicial Bureau investigate why they had taken up the case.

Members of Yang Chunlin's family are under surveillance. They have been warned not to contact the media or human rights lawyers, or risk worsening his situation.

Yang Chunlin was laid off from his job in a state-owned factory several years ago. He has been active in supporting a legal action brought by more than 40,000 local farmers whose land had been confiscated without adequate compensation. In 2006 Yang was detained four times for his involvement in this case, and for his participation in a hunger strike organized by Beijing human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng. Earlier this year he is said to have launched a campaign behind the slogan "We Want Human Rights, not the Olympics" to capture the frustration of local farmers, who feel that the Beijing Olympics is being used to distract attention from violations of their human rights, such as the confiscation of their land. Later the slogan was adopted by other groups around the country.

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

- calling on the authorities to release Yang Chunlin immediately and unconditionally, as he has been detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- urging the authorities to guarantee that Yang Chunlin will not be tortured or ill-treated;
- calling on the authorities to allow him regular visits from his family and lawyers immediately.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister

WEN Jiabao Guojia Zongli

The State Council

9 Xihuangcheng Genbeijie

Beijingshi 100032, People's Republic of China

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Salutation: +8610 6596 2260 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Your Excellency

Director of the Heilongjiang Provincial Department of Public Security
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Salutation: Dear Director

COPIES TO:

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Salutation: Dear Director

and to diplomatic representatives of China accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 October 2007.