

Update on “40 prisoner waiting to be released”

Prisoners released

Ching Cheong, correspondent of the Singapore daily, “The Straits Times” was released on 5 February 2008 and went to Hong Kong. He has been sentenced to five years in the Canton (south) prison for “spying” but was released on parole two years early. On 8 February, **Yu Huafeng**, previous director of the *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, a liberal newspaper, was released after four years in prison. It is thanks to the third remission of his sentence that he was finally released. When the verdict was read out sentencing him to eight years in prison, Yu Huafeng said, “you can manipulate the law, but not history”.

Zhang Shanguan was released on 20 July 2008 after serving his full ten-year prison term. This old activist of Tiananmen Place was refused the treatment he needed for tuberculosis. On 21 July 2008 he told the press that he had really been ill-treated. “I was physically and morally ill-treated” he said, stressing the fact that this experience had made him more determined than ever to fight for citizens’ rights: “I see my ten years in prison as a sort of persecution. I will continue to exercise my civil rights and commit myself as a human rights defender without transgressing the law”.

Last, on 1 April, **Hu Shigen**’s sentence was reduced. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison for having tried to organise a ceremony to commemorate the 1989 massacre. Now, after 16 years in prison, he is to be released from Beijing prison No. 2, on 26 August, two days after the end of the Olympic Games.

The Collective has received alarming information on the detention of several prisoners.

Ye Guozhu, a dissident sentenced to four years in prison in 2004, was supposed to be released on 26 July but the Chinese authorities postponed his release until 1 October 2008. His family received a phone call on 22 July from the Xuanwu police station in Beijing saying that it was unnecessary to come and get Ye Guozhu since he had been sent elsewhere. The authorities told the family that he had been taken away for his own protection during the Olympic Games.

The situation of cyber-dissident **Hu Jia** is becoming more and more critical. He was arrested on 27 December 2007 and, in April 2008, was sentenced to three years and six months in prison for “inciting subversion of state power and of the socialist system”, and one and a half years of deprivation of political rights. He pleaded not guilty. There is still a risk that he will be deprived of medical care, in particular his daily treatment for a liver disease connected to his hepatitis B infection.

His wife, blogger and human rights defender **Zeng Jinyan**, is still under house arrest with her baby daughter Qianci, born last November. She is kept under close police observation. **Cheng Guangcheng**, the self-taught lawyer who was sentenced to three years and three months in prison in 2006, is still in prison. His wife, Yuan Weijing, has been put under house arrest and recently stated it was “because the Olympic Games are approaching that the government has tightened its surveillance on me”. She would like to live a normal life.

According to information received, on 4 July, **Mao Hengfeng** was tortured during most of the month of June.

Hada’s health has been getting steadily worse, **Ronggye A’Drak** has been ill-treated and **Guo Feixiong** has been sentenced to five years in prison.

Since January 2004, Bishop **Jia Zhiguo** has been arbitrarily detained 11 times. He was released on 14 December 2007 and then put under house arrest again and, more recently, has been put under strict police surveillance.

The following persons are either in prison, held in secret, or have been disappeared. Efforts to obtain new information on their current situation have been unsuccessful:

Bishops **Shi Enxiang**, 84 years old, from Yixian, and **Su Zhimin**, 75 years old from the Baoding diocese; Pastor **Zhang Rongliang**, head of the Protestant China for Christ Church and **Gong Shengliang**, former leader of the South China Church, and his niece **Li Ying**;

Yao Fuxin et **Liu Zhihua**, trade union leaders;

Sun Xiaodi and **Wu Lihong**, environmental activists;

Political dissidents: **Yang Zili**, author of a series of articles supporting political liberalism, **Kong Youping**, member of the Chinese Democratic Party (CDP), and **Qin Yongmin**, human rights defender and founder of CDP.

Members of the Uighur community: **Nurmuhemmet Yasin**, **Nurhahmat Yusup**, **Tao Haidong** and **Tohti Tunyaz**;

The cyber-dissident **He Depu**;

The following Tibetans: **Jimge Tenzin Nyima**, **Tenzin Delek Rinpoche**, **Jigme Gyatso**, **Tashi Gyatso**, and **Dolma Kyab** ;

Lu Wenbin, worker in a factory and journalist;

Gao Zhisheng and **Qi Zhiyong**, human rights defenders.

Details on the cases of the 40 prisoners who should be released before the Games can be found on line in “40 prisoners to free before the Olympic Games”:

<http://pekin2008.rsfblog.org>