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CHINA DETENTION AND HARASSMENT OF DISSIDENTS AND OTHERS BETWEEN JANUARY AND JUNE 1998

June 1998

SUMMARY

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The attached document lists the cases of 50 people who have been detained or harassed by police in China since the beginning of the year for peacefully expressing their views or using their right to freedom of association. They include political dissidents, human rights defenders, workers, labour rights activists, and relatives or friends of political prisoners or dissidents who were arbitrarily detained for using their right to freedom of expression.

This list does not include other categories of people who have been the targets of police harassment and repression, such as members of religious or ethnic groups.

Fifteen of those listed are reported to be still detained or restricted. They include seven people who have been sentenced to terms of detention or imprisonment, and eight others who, as of mid-June 1998, were reported to be still detained or restricted, some having been charged with criminal offences.

Amnesty International believes that they are arbitrarily detained for the peaceful exercise of fundamental freedoms. It is calling on the Chinese authorities to release immediately and unconditionally all those arbitrarily detained on this ground, and to disclose without delay the whereabouts of those who may have been charged with criminal offences, as well as details of the charges and accusations against them, and whether they have access to lawyers.

KEYWORDS: DETENTION FOR RE-EDUCATION1 / HARASSMENT1 /
PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE1 / DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL /
INCOMMUNICADO DETENTION / HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS / POLITICAL
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This report summarizes a 12-page document (5228 words), : CHINA DETENTION AND HARASSMENT OF DISSIDENTS AND OTHERS BETWEEN JANUARY AND JUNE 1998 (AI Index: ASA 17/16/98) issued by Amnesty International in June 1998. Anyone wishing further details or to take action on this issue should consult the full document.

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DETENTION AND HARASSMENT OF DISSIDENTS AND OTHERS BETWEEN JANUARY AND JUNE 1998

INTRODUCTION

This document lists the cases of 50 people who have been detained or harassed by police in China since the beginning of the year for peacefully expressing their views or using their right to freedom of association. This list focuses on the cases of political dissidents, human rights defenders, worker rights activists, and relatives or friends of political prisoners or dissidents who were arbitrarily detained for using their right to freedom of expression. The list does not include other categories of people who have been the targets of police harassment and repression, such as members of religious or ethnic groups.

Fifteen of those listed are reported to be still detained or restricted. They include seven people who have been sentenced to terms of detention or imprisonment, and eight others who, as of mid-June 1998, were reported to be still detained or restricted, some having been charged with criminal offences. Most of the others were held by police for questioning for a few hours or days, while some were arbitrarily detained for several weeks without charge and then released.

In many cases, they were detained after issuing open letters or petitions to the authorities, in apparent attempts by police to intimidate or silence them at politically sensitive moments. Many, for example, were detained in February and March, before and during the annual session of the National People's Congress (NPC) - China's parliament. At that time, many dissidents addressed open letters to the NPC, calling for reforms over a variety of social, political and human rights issues. Another wave of arrests took place in May, during the approach to the ninth anniversary of the 4 June 1989 crackdown on the pro-democracy protests, when many people petitioned the authorities for a re-evaluation of the 1989 events and the release of political prisoners.

Some were also detained for taking part in peaceful protests or because of their association with other dissidents, apparently as a warning to others or to prevent them from forming networks across the country.

Amnesty International is particularly concerned about the cases **Li Yi**, **Wu Ruojie**, **Shen Liangqing**, **Yang Qingheng**, **Wang Tingjin** and **Li Qingxi** who have been arbitrarily sentenced, without charge or trial, to terms of "re-education through labour" - an administrative punishment which is imposed by executive authorities, outside the judicial process, and which usually involves detention in a forced labour camp. The cases of **Li Yi**, a businessman, and **Wu Ruojie**, a rock singer, are particularly striking and unprecedented in China's recent history of repression. Neither of them is known to have been involved in dissident activities. They were sentenced to three years in a labour camp for allegedly reporting to others the arrest of four poets who were their friends and in one case a relative.

Amnesty International is calling on the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally, as well as the others who were arbitrarily sentenced to terms of "re-education through labour". It is also calling on the international community, including governments engaged in a human rights dialogue with China, to call for their release.

Amnesty International is also concerned that several dissidents who are currently detained may be brought to trial in the coming weeks. Some of them are known to have been charged with criminal offences. Others may have been charged as well without notification being given to their family or without such information being known outside their family circle. They include **Ma Zhe** and **Xiong Jingren**, two poets from Guizhou province who have been held for nearly five months in incommunicado detention for planning to publish an independent literary magazine; **Li Bifeng**, a former tax officer from Sichuan province, who was reportedly charged with fraud in April after monitoring and publicizing the situation of laid-off workers in the province; **Fan Yiping**, a company manager from Guangzhou city, reportedly charged in May with helping a fellow dissident escape from China; **Zhao Changping**, a factory worker from Shaanxi province, reportedly charged in April with "endangering national security", and **Chen Zengxiang**, who has been detained in Shandong province since 23 May reportedly for investigation of his links with exiled dissidents.

Amnesty International believes that they are arbitrarily detained for the peaceful exercise of fundamental freedoms. It is calling on the authorities to release immediately and unconditionally those who have not been charged with offences which would be legitimately recognized as criminal under international law, and to disclose without delay the whereabouts of those who may have been charged with such offences, as well as the charges and accusations against them, and whether they have access to lawyers.

LIST OF CASES:

Cai Guihua, a dissident from Shanghai, was detained for questioning by police on 4 June 1998 together with several other dissidents who met in a restaurant in Shanghai (see below, Dai Xuezhong). He was released after a few hours. On 12 June, he reportedly co-signed an open letter with five other activists¹, saying that they would go on hunger strike if police restricted their freedom of movement during US President Bill Clinton's visit to Shanghai later in June.²

Chen Zengxiang, a veteran democracy activist from Qingdao, Shandong province, was reportedly detained by police on 23 May 1998 for investigation of his alleged links with a dissident exile group. According to unofficial sources, several dissidents in Qingdao, including Li Xielin and Yan Peng, were subsequently summoned for interrogation by police in late May, apparently as part of security measures taken before the ninth anniversary of the 4 June 1989 crackdown. As of mid-June 1998, Chen Zengxiang was reported to be still detained, though the authorities had not made public any formal charge against him.

Cheng Fan, a pro-democracy activist from Shanghai, was reportedly detained for a few hours for questioning on 6 April 1998 after he co-signed a petition, together with Wang Youcai (see below), demanding the release of Shen Liangqing and Yang Qingheng (see below). Both had also reportedly issued a statement in February calling for the release of political prisoners.

Chu Hailian (f) and **Wu Huifen** (f), respectively the wife and 80-year-old mother of prisoner of conscience Liu Nianchun, were detained by police for several hours on 21 May 1998 after starting a silent protest in front of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. The protest was to call on the authorities to give Liu Nianchun adequate medical care. The two women had visited Liu at the Tuanhe labour camp on the morning of 21 May and said later he looked skeletal and suffered from various ailments for which he was not receiving appropriate treatment. Soon after they unfurled a protest banner in Tiananmen Square, police took them away for questioning to a police station where Chu Hailian was reportedly forced to write a "confession", following which both women were released at around midnight.

Dai Xuezhong, a human rights activist from Shanghai, was reportedly detained by police on 17 May 1998 together with fellow activist Han Lifa. Both had reportedly planned to hold a commemoration of the victims of 4 June 1989 on the Bund in Shanghai, but were detained before they reached the Bund. They were reportedly released after 12 hours and placed under police surveillance. Dai Xuezhong, a member of the unofficial Shanghai Human Rights Association, spent a total of six years in labour-reeducation camps since 1989 because of his

¹Dai Xuezhong, Han Lifa, Li Guotao, Yao Zhenxian and Zhou Jianhe.

²See *Agence France Presse* (AFP), Beijing, 12 June 1998.

involvement in the 1989 protests and subsequent human rights activities. He was detained again on 4 June 1998 together with several other activists from Shanghai, including Zhou Jianhe, Yao Zhenxian and Cai Guihua, when they met in a restaurant. They were taken to a police station and questioned for a several hours before being released.

Fan Yiping, 45, a veteran pro-democracy campaigner and manager of a food company in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, was detained on 16 March 1998 reportedly for investigation into his links with exiled dissidents. Several other people in Guangzhou were detained for questioning by police at around the same time, apparently in connection with his arrest (see below, Huang Yusheng, Su Jiang, Zhou Jianzhong). Two months later, Fan Yiping was charged with "helping in an illegal exit from the territory", for allegedly helping veteran activist Wang Xizhe³ to escape from China in October 1996. According to dissident sources, the real reason for Fan Yiping's detention was his support for independent labour unions. During the 1979 "Democracy Wall" movement, Fan was one of the editors of the unofficial magazine "Voice of the People". The authorities have not made public any information about his case.

Han Lifa, a human rights activist from Shanghai, was detained for 12 hours on 17 May 1998 together with Dai Xuezhong (see above), apparently to prevent them from holding a commemoration of the victims of the 1989 crackdown.

Huang Yusheng, a dissident from Guangzhou, Guangdong province, was reportedly detained for questioning by police in mid-March 1998, apparently in connection with Fan Yiping's arrest (see above). Another Guangzhou dissident, Zhou Jianzhong, was detained at the same time. Both he and Huang Yusheng were released after a few hours. Huang had been involved in helping publish "Voice of the People" during the "Democracy Wall" movement.

Jin Jiwu, a dissident from Hunan province who served two years in a labour-reeducation camp for taking part in the 1989 pro-democracy movement, was reportedly detained for three days from 11 March 1998 as he was travelling to Nanjing to see friends.

Leng Wanbao, 38, a former prisoner of conscience and worker at a car factory in Changchun, Jilin province, was reportedly detained for a short period by police from 24 March 1998 ahead of a reported visit to the factory by Premier Zhu Rongji. Police also reportedly warned three other former prisoners of conscience in Changchun to keep out of the public limelight. Leng Wanbao, who had spent five years in prison for his activities during the 1989 protests, made various public appeals for reforms during the past year. In an appeal

³Wang Xizhe escaped from China in October 1996, after the arrest in Beijing of literary critic Liu Xiaobo with whom he had co-authored an open letter calling for political reform, autonomy for Tibet and the impeachment of President Jiang Zemin. Following his arrest on 8 October 1996, Liu Xiaobo was sentenced with unprecedented speed, the same day, to three years of "re-education through labour".

to the NPC in February 1998, he called for measures to curb corruption, for freedom of the press, direct elections and independent labour unions.

Li Baiguang, a law professor at Hainan University, was reportedly detained for three days by police in early April 1998 after organising a discussion group on political reform. According to press reports, a staff member of the University Law Department denied knowledge of his detention at the time, saying that Li had gone on leave on personal business and was expected back in the next few days.⁴ There has been no further information about his reported detention.

Li Bifeng, 34, a labour rights activist and formerly a cadre in Mianyang Tax Bureau, Sichuan province, was detained by police on 8 March 1998, when he was taken from a taxi at a toll booth while on his way to visit his family. He was reportedly charged with fraud on 6 April 1998. Li Bifeng had been in hiding since July 1997, when he publicized protests by thousands of workers in Mianyang over alleged misappropriation of unemployment funds by corrupt cadres in three collapsed state firms⁵. Serious labour unrest had erupted elsewhere in Sichuan province over the previous months. Li Bifeng publicly denounced the repression of the Mianyang protests in an open letter, then went into hiding to avoid arrest. In February 1998, while still in hiding, he reportedly conducted a public opinion poll on redundancies in Sichuan province. Li had been jailed for 5 years for taking part in the 1989 pro-democracy movement. He is believed to be held at Jiangyou City Detention Centre.

Li Qingxi, a 41 year-old unemployed worker from Datong city, Shanxi Province, was detained by police on 16 January 1998, after writing and publicly circulating a declaration calling for free trade unions.⁶ In March 1998, he was sentenced without charge or trial to one year of "re-education through labour", reportedly to be carried out "outside the labour camp". His current whereabouts are not known.

Li Wensheng, a lawyer from Guangzhou who had defended students arrested during the 1989 crackdown, is reported to have been detained for questioning by police three times in April and May 1998, for his alleged involvement in attempting to set up an independent trade union. Li is said to have been associated with a worker's rights activist, Tan Li, who was himself detained in February (see below).

⁴See Reuters, Beijing, 9 April 1998.

⁵See *People's Republic of China: Summary of Amnesty International Concerns*, February 1998, AI Index: ASA 17/06/98, page 8.

⁶ See ASA 17/06/98, page 9.

Li Xielin, a pro-democracy activist from Qingdao, Shandong province; was reportedly detained on 27 May 1998, following the detention of fellow activist Chen Zengxiang (see above) and previous warnings by police that he should keep a low profile around the ninth anniversary of the 4 June 1989 crackdown. Li was reported to be still detained by police in Qingdao at the beginning of June 1998, but his current situation is unknown.

Li Yi, a young businessman from Guiyang, Guizhou province, was sentenced to three years of "re-education through labour" in April 1998 for allegedly telling people outside China about the arrest of four poets in Guiyang in January 1998. The brother of one of the poets, Wu Ruojie (see below) was detained for the same reason and received the same sentence as Li Yi. Both were reportedly accused of "divulging state secrets". According to unofficial sources, Li Yi had often provided activities sites for the Guiyang poets and artists. His current place of detention is not known. Two of the poets detained in January, Ma Zhe and Xiong Jinren (see below), are reported to be still held incommunicado.

Lin Xinsu, 55, a doctor of Chinese medicine and veteran dissident from Fuzhou, Fujian province, was detained without charge for three weeks from 26 February 1998 after being held three days under house arrest by plainclothes police. In previous months, he had addressed several open letters to the Chinese authorities, calling for reforms and the release of political prisoners. His arrest followed the issue of one such open letter on 13 February 1998 in which he urged the authorities not to appoint the then Premier, Li Peng, as Chairman of the NPC. He was released on 22 March, without explanation, after the annual session of the NPC closed in Beijing.

Liu Kangxiu, 34, a construction engineer from Zhongshan City, Guangdong province, was reportedly detained on 28 March 1998 and accused of endangering national security for writing a manuscript on political reform, which was confiscated by police. He was reportedly released "on bail" on 6 April 1998.

Liu Lianjun, a computer technician from Shandong province who had reportedly helped dissidents hook up their computers to the Internet, was reportedly detained by police on 29 May 1998 while visiting friends in Beijing. Police allegedly threatened to kill him unless he answered their questions about his activities. He was held for seven days without charge, then released.

Ma Lianggang, 28, a former Anhui University student, was taken away from his home by police in Hefei, Anhui province, on 28 February 1998 and subsequently detained for 27 days without charge. No official explanation was given for his detention, though it was believed to be linked to the arrests of other dissidents at the approach of the NPC's annual session, which opened in March. Ma Lianggang had been imprisoned twice for taking part in pro-democracy activities since 1989, including for more than a year in 1992-93.

Ma Qiang, a poet from Guiyang, Guizhou province, was detained on 26 January 1998 together with three other poets in Guiyang, two of whom are still detained (see below Ma Zhe). Ma Qiang was held for several weeks without charge before being released.

Ma Zhe (real name **Xue Deyun**), 38, a dissident poet from Guiyang, Guizhou province, was detained on 26 January 1998 together with three other anti-establishment poets in Guiyang, Ma Qiang, Wu Ruohai and Xiong Jingren. The four men were arrested as they were planning to launch an independent literary magazine called "China Cultural Renaissance" aimed at increasing literary freedom. The police reportedly raided their homes without a search warrant, taking away draft copies of their work and address books. Their families received no explanation for their detention and were subsequently denied access to them. Ma Qiang and Wu Ruohai were released after a few weeks, but Ma Zhe and Xiong Jinren remained in secret detention and are reported to still held. The authorities have not made public any charges against them, though they are reported to have been accused of endangering national security. Ma Zhe had been arbitrarily imprisoned for three years previously for taking part in students protests in Beijing in December 1986.⁷ At the time, he was associated to an unofficial literary group, the "Enlightenment Society", formed in Guizhou province by literary and political theorists during the Democracy Wall Movement of the late 1970s.

Mao Guoliang, a pro-democracy activist from Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, was detained for questioning on 19 February 1998 after he and six other activists addressed an open letter to the NPC arguing against the anticipated appointment of the then Premier, Li Peng, as NPC Chairman. Ma was briefly detained at least twice since then for jointly issuing petitions to the authorities.

Miao Xike, the owner of a Karaoke restaurant in Shenzhen, was reportedly detained in Beijing on 6 March 1998 during the NPC meeting when he staged a protest in Tiananmen Square, shouting slogans and setting up a sign saying "the Communist Party must give us back our human rights". His mother was also detained and questioned about his activities. He was released on 24 March 1998 but reportedly detained for brief periods on two occasions since then. On 26 May 1998, he was placed under virtual house arrest and warned by police not to leave his house until after the anniversary of the 4 June 1989 crackdown.

Ni Jinxiu (f), see below Ni Yuxiao.

Ni Yuxiao (f), the sister of Ni Jipin, a human rights activist from Shanghai who left China on 1 April 1998 to escape police harassment, was arrested on 30 April 1998, as was her sister

⁷See *People's Republic of China: Arrests Following Recent Student Demonstrations*, issued in January 1987, AI Index: ASA. 17/01/87, and *Prisoners of Conscience in the People's Republic of China: A Representative Selection of Cases of Concern to Amnesty International*, June 1987, ASA 17/05/87, p.34.

Ni Jinxiu, who was released after a few days. Ni Yuxiao reportedly suffers from a liver problem which kept her housebound and had never been involved with the human rights movement. She is believed to have been detained because she knew some of her brother's friends. She is reported to have been conditionally released after one month in detention, with formal restrictions imposed on her by police for one year on "national security" grounds. The restrictions involve prohibition to leave Shanghai without police permission and the obligation to report to the police every week.

Qin Yongmin, 48, a veteran and outspoken dissident from Wuhan, Hubei province, was briefly detained by police on 28 March 1998 for questioning about a series of open letters he had addressed to the authorities about human rights issues. He had also announced his intention to form a human rights group together with Xu Wenli (see below). In late May 1998, police reportedly confiscated Qin Yongmin's identity card and told him to stay at home over the 4 June anniversary. Qin was imprisoned several times since the early 1980s for his activities in support of democratic and human rights reforms.

Shen Liangqing, a pro-democracy campaigner and former assistant public prosecutor from Hefei, Anhui province, was detained by police on 25 February 1998 and assigned in late March 1998 to two years of "re-education through labour" for "unauthorized contacts" with foreign journalists and human rights groups in Hong Kong and outside China. Shen Liangqing had been previously detained for 46 days without charge from 1 September 1997 after issuing a series of open letters to the authorities⁸. He was released "on bail" on 16 October 1997 and placed under "police supervision". This reportedly included instructions not to leave Hefei and not to give interviews to foreign journalists or issue open letters. Shen Liangqing, however, continued to write petitions and open letters. In November 1997, he issued a written statement to police demanding that they "admit their errors" for illegally detaining him for 46 days without charge and that they stop harassing him. In January 1998, he co-signed a petition issued by several dissidents demanding the release of Li Qingxi (see above). In February, just a few days before his arrest, he addressed an open letter to the NPC over the anticipated appointment of Premier Li Peng as Chairman of the NPC.

Su Jiang (f), the wife of exiled dissident Wang Xizhe, was reportedly detained for questioning by police in Guangzhou on 18 March 1998, apparently in connection with the arrest of a democracy activist from Guangzhou, Fan Yiping (see above). She was released after being held for eight hours.

⁸ See *People's Republic of China: Summary of Amnesty International Concerns*, February 1998, AI Index: ASA 17/06/98, page 8.

Tan Li, a worker at the Guangzhou Ocean Shipping Company, was reportedly briefly detained by police on 6 February 1998, one day before he was planning to hold a rally for workers' rights, for which he had requested permission from the authorities. Tan Li and a lawyer, Li Wensheng (see above), had reportedly previously announced the founding of an independent labour union, called the China Labour Alliance.

Tu Guangwen, a tricycle driver from Wuhan, Hubei province, was reportedly sentenced on 19 February 1998 to three years' imprisonment after being convicted of "gathering a crowd to disrupt orderly traffic". He had reportedly led a demonstration by disgruntled pedicab drivers in Wuhan last October, in protest at a city-wide ban on tricycles imposed by the city authorities last August.

Wang Donghai, 51, a veteran pro-democracy campaigner from Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, who issued several petitions to the authorities in the past few months, was detained on 6 February 1998 and held for a few days for questioning in connection with the return to China of exiled dissident Wang Bingzhang (see below Wang Tingjin).

Wang Hongxue, 37, a labour activist and infirmary worker at a textile factory in Bengbu, Anhui province, was reportedly detained on 29 May 1998 after police discovered he was planning to go to Beijing to mark the 4 June anniversary. Police reportedly confiscated his identity card and issued a warrant to detain him for 15 days without charge, under a public order law. Since 1997, Wang Hongxue had issued or co-signed a number of appeals calling for the release of other dissidents and for free trade unions.

Wang Tingjin, 43, a maths teacher from Bengbu, Anhui Province, was detained on 6 February 1998 after meeting Wang Bingzhang, a dissident in exile in the USA who came back to China in January under an assumed name and was subsequently deported back to the USA. Wang Tingjin was held for over one month without charge, then released. Arrested again on 14 April 1998, he was sentenced without trial the same day to three years⁹ of "re-education through labour", for "disturbing social order". No other explanation for his sentence was apparently provided by the authorities. He was the third dissident to be sentenced since the end of March 1998, when similar sentences were passed on Shen Liangqing (see above) and Yang Qingheng (see below). Wang Tingjin was sent to carry out his sentence to the Nanhu labour camp, in Anhui province.

Wang Youcai, a former student leader in Beijing in 1989, based in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, was questioned by police on 23 February 1998 after co-signing a petition to the

⁹ According to some sources, he was sentenced to two years of "re-education through labour".

NPC arguing against the appointment of Premier Li Peng as NPC chairman. He was subsequently reported to have been placed under tight police surveillance during the annual session of the NPC in March and to have been briefly detained for questioning in April after co-signing an appeal for the release of two dissidents. He was reportedly briefly detained again in late April. Wang Youcai had served three years in prison for his role in the 1989 protests.

Wu Ruohai, 35, a poet from Guiyang, Guizhou province, was detained on 26 January 1998 together with his six-year old son and three other poets from Guiyang (see above, Ma Zhe). Wu Ruhai was released in late February or March, but his brother Wu Ruojie was subsequently sentenced for circulating information about Wu Ruohai's detention (see below).

Wu Ruojie, 36, a rock musician from Guiyang, Guizhou Province, was sentenced without trial to 3 years of "re-education through labour" in early April 1998 for "divulging state secrets". In late January 1998, Wu's brother, Wu Ruohai, was detained with three other poets as they prepared to launch an independent literary review. A young businessman from Guiyang, Li Yi, received the same sentence as Wu Ruojie. Both were reportedly accused of "divulging state secrets" for telling foreign journalists and people outside China about the arrest of the four poets in January. The authorities have not made public any information about their case, nor about the two poets from Guiyang who have been arbitrarily held incommunicado for almost five months (see above, Ma Zhe). Wu Ruojie's current whereabouts are unknown.

Xiong Jinren, a poet from Guiyang, Guizhou province, was detained on 26 January 1998 together with three other poets (see above, Ma Zhe). Two of the poets, including Xiong Jingren, are reported to be still detained, though the charges against them, if any, have not been made public.

Xu Shuiliang, a veteran pro-democracy activist from Nanjing who was imprisoned several times since the mid-1970s, was detained for questioning by police in February 1998 when he attempted to leave Nanjing to visit his ailing mother in Zhejiang province. Police reportedly told him that this was illegal. Xu Shuiliang had been under constant police surveillance since his release from prison in 1991, and left China to escape police harassment at the end of March 1998.

Xu Wenli, 54, a veteran dissident from Beijing who spent 12 years in prison from 1981 for his pro-democracy activities, was detained for 24 hours by police on 3 April 1998 after he made an application to publish a magazine called "Human Rights Watch" together with fellow dissident Qin Yongmin, from Wuhan (see above). Xu Wenli was detained again on 10 May 1998 when he arrived in Wuhan, Hubei province, where he was planning to meet Qin Yongmin. Xu was released after two days on condition he should return immediately to

Beijing, without meeting Qin Yongmin. Xu was detained again on 29 May while on a train bound for the southern city of Shenzhen, where he was planning to meet his sister. He was held by police for three days in a city of Guangdong province then put on a return train to Beijing on 2 June.

Yan Peng, from Shandong province, was reported to have been detained for questioning for a short period in late May 1998 (see above Chen Zengxiang and Li Xielin).

Yang Qingheng, 44, a pro-democracy and human rights activist from Shanghai who had been active since the late 1970s, was detained on 26 February 1998 and sentenced without trial in late March to three years of "re-education through labour" for "disturbing social order". According to unofficial sources, the authorities accused him of stirring up social unrest because he had read an open letter on Radio Free Asia on 27 January 1998, in which he spoke about unemployment and called for independent trade unions. Yang Qingheng had previously issued or co-signed several petitions calling for human rights reforms. Following his sentencing, his family reportedly complained that the authorities had failed to follow proper legal procedures in detaining him. Yang Qingheng had been jailed for several years twice before during the 1980s and in 1994. He was also briefly detained in early February 1998 in connection with the visit to China of exiled dissident Wang Bingzhang.

Yao Zhenxian, 42, from Shanghai, was briefly detained for questioning on 4 June 1998 (see above Dai Xuezhong).

Zhang Fangrong (f), the wife of Wang Tingjin, from Bengbu, Anhui province, was detained for 24 hours by police on 6 February 1998 when her husband was arrested (see above, Wang Tingjin).

Zhang Rujun, a dissident from Shanghai, was one of a number of dissidents detained for by police in February 1998 in connection with the visit to China of exiled dissident Wang Bingzhang, who was subsequently deported back to the USA. Detained on 7 February 1998, Zhang Rujun was released three days later. He was detained again by Shanghai police on 26 February after he and 16 other dissidents issued a joint appeal to the authorities calling for human rights reforms. He was released on 2 March.

Zhang Yuxiang, a former cadre in the People's Liberation Army district propaganda department, from Jiangsu province, was reportedly detained for three days in early February 1998 for questioning about exiled dissident Wang Bingzhang's visit to China (see above, Wang Tingjin). Zhang Yuxiang had been jailed for two years in 1991 for his alleged involvement in a "counter-revolutionary" political group.

Zhao Changqing, a 28-year-old factory worker in Hanzhong, Shaanxi province, was detained on 13 January 1998 as he was trying to stand as a candidate in local

elections. He had reportedly distributed leaflets protesting a ruling by his factory that he was not allowed to take part in local People's Congress elections, due to be held on 14 January ¹⁰. He was reportedly detained for ten days in his dormitory, then formally arrested on 23 January and taken by police to an unknown destination. Released on 22 February 1998, he was reported to have been placed under house arrest at his home in Hanzhong. He was reportedly re-arrested on 25 March 1998 from his home and charged on 1 April with "endangering national security". There has been no news of him since then and his whereabouts are unknown.

Zhou Jianhe, a dissident from Shanghai, was briefly detained by police on 4 June 1998 together with several other people (see above, Cai Guihua and Dai Xuezhong).

Zhou Jianzhong, a dissident from Guangzhou, Guangdong province, was reportedly briefly detained in mid-March 1998 in connection with Fan Yiping's detention (see above, Fan Yiping).

¹⁰ See *People's Republic of China: Summary of Amnesty International Concerns*, February 1998, AI Index: ASA 17/06/98, and *People's Republic of China: Appeal for Li Qingxi and Zhao Changqing*, 12 February 1998, AI Index: ASA 17/05/98.