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Arrests

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NEW INFORMATION ON ARRESTS AND RELEASES IN CHINA

The arrests of several Chinese who took part in the democracy movement have been reported to Asia Watch in the last two days, while two graduate students detained at Beijing's airport on June 5 were released and have returned to the United States.

Those reported arrested are LI Dan, LIU Xiaobo, CHEN Mingyuan, REN Wanding, XIAO Bin, ZHANG Nuanxin, YAO Yongzhan, GAO Haifeng (also seen as WONG Haifeng), BAO Tong, CAO Siyuan, LEE Chukyan and SHEN Jizhong. They are among hundreds believed detained in Beijing, Shanghai and elsewhere in a wave of arrests that began following the military assault on Tiananmen Square on June 3-4. The arrests of Ren Wanding, Yao Yongzhan and Gao Haifeng have been confirmed by Western journalists; in the other cases, the information comes from sources close enough to those involved that Asia Watch believes that they are probably accurate.

Li Dan, a veteran announcer for English-language broadcasts of Radio Beijing, was broadcasting news of the massacre in Tiananmen Square on Sunday morning, June 4, and announced that thousands had been killed. According to one source, his last words over the air were, "And now for the official version of the news..." Immediately after the broadcast, according to the same source, the translator for the program was shot and killed by soldiers; Li Dan, a man in his early forties, was arrested. Li Dan had attended McGill University in Montreal and was known by friends as the "little Walter Cronkite" because his voice when speaking English was so similar to the American newsman's. It is not known where Li Dan is detained.

Liu Xiaobo, 34, is reported to have been arrested on Tuesday, June 6, when a man in plainclothes hustled him into a white car, according to eyewitness accounts. A native of Jilin province, Liu was a graduate of Jilin University and had just finished his doctoral

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dissertation at Beijing Normal University on the aesthetics of Chinese literature. He is currently on the faculty at Beijing Normal University. A well-known literary critic, Liu is the author of several books and articles, and once wrote for the Shenzhen Youth Daily. In April 1989, while visiting the United States, he published an article entitled "Contemporary Chinese Intellectuals and Politics" in which he strongly criticized some of the older Chinese intellectuals like Liu Binyan. He returned to China in late April to take part in the democracy movement. Following the declaration of martial law, he and three other activists began a hunger strike on June 2 at the base of the Monument of Revolutionary Heroes in Tiananmen Square. In a proclamation issued at the beginning of the strike, the four stated, "Through our hunger strike, we want also to tell the people that what the government media refers to as a small bunch of trouble makers is in fact the whole nation. We may not be students, but we are citizens whose sense of duty makes us support the democracy movement started by the college students..."

Chen Ming Yuan, in his late 40's, is a professor at the Foreign Languages Institute in Beijing and taught Chinese to many foreigners resident there. He is also a mathematician and a poet. He was taken to the hospital recently with high blood pressure, and was reportedly arrested in the hospital on Friday or Saturday.

Gao Haifeng (also seen as Wong Haifeng) is reported to have been one of the top leaders of the student movement in Beijing.

Ren Wanding is one of the few activists from the Democracy Wall movement period (1978-79) to have taken an active role in the 1989 demonstrations. The founder of the China Human Rights League, Ren was denounced together with Wei Jingsheng as a non-Marxist when the crackdown on the Democracy Wall movement came in 1979. He was arrested and spent four years in prison, his initial sentence having been extended when he refused to make an acceptable self-criticism. In 1988, he wrote an article for the New York Times on the tenth anniversary of Democracy Wall, calling on activist students to speak out for those in prison and on the business community to make any investment in China conditional on an end to suppression of dissidents (see attached). He is reported to have been arrested on June 9, about 8 pm. His place of detention is not known.

Zhang Nuan Xin, a film director in her late forties, is reported to have been arrested within the last few days but the exact date and the circumstances of her arrest are not clear. She is the wife of the writer Li Tuo and may have been arrested for his outspoken support of some of the younger dissident intellectuals. He was among the signers of the February petition to the National People's Congress supporting the call of Fang

Lizhi for an amnesty for political prisoners. Fang Lizhi, now in the American embassy in Beijing, has been denounced by Chinese authorities as one of the masterminds of the student demonstrations and on June 11 was ordered arrested by Chinese authorities.

Xiao Bin, 42, an unemployed factory worker, was arrested on June 10 after having been interviewed by ABC News on the Tiananmen Square massacre. The ABC broadcast showed him imitating how machine guns had mowed down demonstrators. He was turned in shortly after Beijing television appealed to viewers to turn him in for rumor-mongering and is now in police custody.

Yao Yongzhan, a student activist from Hong Kong, was arrested on June 11 as he was about to board a plane for Hong Kong; he had been accompanied to the airport by British consular staff. According to Reuters, Shanghai radio accused him of being the leader of the outlawed "Autonomous Union of Shanghai College Students" and said he was under investigation for violating local laws.

Lee Chukyan, an Executive Committee member of the Christian Industrial Committee in Hong Kong, is reported to have been arrested on June 5 in Beijing and detained at the Beijing Hotel a day later, according to Amnesty International. He had arrived from Hong Kong four days earlier and was in contact with independent worker and student associations. His current whereabouts are not known. Detainees from Hong Kong face particular difficulties as the Chinese do not allow them the legal rights to which they would be entitled in Hong Kong.

Bao Tong and Cao Siyuan are both senior advisers to Party Secretary General Zhao Ziyang. Cao, according to Amnesty International, is believed to have been arrested on the afternoon of June 3. Bao Tong may have been arrested several days earlier. Since January 1988, Bao Tong, 56, had been head of the Communist Party's Political Reform Research Center and was a member of the Central Committee. He is identified with the reformist views of his mentor, Zhao Ziyang, but rejected Western-style democracy as "irrelevant" for China, according to an article in the Asian Wall Street Journal (December 26, 1988).

One worker is reported to have been arrested in Shanghai on May 31 for making a pro-democracy speech; his name is SHEN Jizhong, a florist in his 40's. No other details about him are available, and it is not known whether he was released before the June 3-4 crackdown.

The two Chinese graduate students studying in the United States who had returned to Beijing to support the democracy movement have been released from custody and are now back in Chicago and Los Angeles respectively. CHENG Yu, a graduate

student at the University of Chicago, her baby, Payton Lee, and Tong Boning, a UCLA student, returned to the US on June 10.

Please write to members of Congress urging them to bring the cases of those detained to the attention of the US embassy in Beijing. They should ask embassy personnel to try and ascertain the place of detention of the activists and the conditions under which they are being held. Appeals should also be sent to the Chinese authorities, protesting the arrests of individuals engaged in peaceful demonstrations and urging their immediate and unconditional release.