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CHINA CAMPAIGN NEWS

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



A PARAMILITARY POLICEMAN KEEPS WATCH NEAR THE OLYMPIC COUNTDOWN CLOCK. © PRIVATE

It is 2008, the year of the rat and a big year for China. This August it is hosting the Olympic Games, the biggest sporting event in the world, and more people will be watching China than ever before.

China's dazzling economic development and rapid modernisation will be on show and the Games will leave some positive memories that the Chinese people will enjoy for many years to come. The big question is, what other legacy will the Games leave behind? Will there be, as Amnesty International hopes, a strengthened rule of law, increased transparency and a greater respect for human rights?

Our campaign for human rights in China is well underway and Amnesty International activists have taken part in forums and workshops, organised public speaking

events, engaged in letter writing and spread the word at music festivals around Australia.

This edition of *China Campaign News* outlines lots of ways that you can get involved in our campaign. Check out the key dates for the campaign leading up to the Olympics (see right), get out your calendar and start planning your year of action! You can also write a letter in support of a human rights defender and find out about internet repression in China and how it works. And we've got more ideas for what you can do with your China group on page 3.

This year, millions of people around the world will work on the China campaign to end online censorship, abolish the death penalty, stop torture and free human rights defenders. Thanks for being part of it!

The China Team

CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

Here are the main dates on which we will be mobilising around the country to campaign for human rights in China. Make a note of these dates and check our website www.amnesty.org.au/china or your local Amnesty International office for the activities and events that you can be part of.

30 APRIL

100 day countdown to the Games

3 MAY

World Press Freedom Day

4 JUNE

19th anniversary of Tiananmen crackdown

8 AUGUST

Olympic Games launch in Beijing

THE GREAT FIREWALL OF CHINA

You've heard of the Great Wall of China, but have you heard of the 'great firewall of China'? The great firewall is the name given to China's censorship machine. The Chinese Government monitors chat rooms, deletes blogs, restricts search engines, blocks websites and user-generated content sites and re-routes search results – all to make sure they control the information the Chinese population can access. So how do they do it?

- If users enter blacklisted search terms, they get an error message before being re-routed to authorised government sites. If users continue to search, it can result in their internet connection 'timing out' – effectively being kicked offline.
- More than 30,000 state security personnel are reported to be monitoring websites, chat rooms and private email. They can block websites, delete blogs and conduct surveillances on 'targeted persons' – including those who continue to post or access information that the Chinese Government considers to be sensitive or a 'state secret'.
- It is reported that internet cafés in China are subject to surveillance and that many have introduced an extra layer of censoring software to ensure their business is not closed down due to customer behaviour. Café customers must provide their full name before using computers and authorities conduct random checks.
- Cartoon cybercops were introduced in August 2007. They wear police uniforms and pop up on people's screen every 30 minutes on China's 13 most popular websites, reminding people not to view 'sensitive material'.
- Self-censorship – with no clear list of what's censored and what authorities are looking for, people are fearful and alter their own behaviour.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON
JAILED JOURNALIST SHI TAO, SYDNEY 2007. © AI

SIGN THE PLEDGE
TO SUPPORT HUMAN
RIGHTS IN CHINA
www.amnesty.org.au/china

VIDEO-SHARING CENSORSHIP

Google's site YouTube has changed the internet. Most of us can now easily create a video of ourselves playing Star Wars or doing dance moves in the bedroom and make it available for the world to see. User-generated content has exploded onto the internet and we're all watching.

The recent crisis in Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) also proved how important online video can be in showing the world what is happening in places that are traditionally closed to scrutiny. People saw human rights abuses as they were happening.

The Chinese Government is trying to shut this phenomenon down. From 31 January new internet licence agreements dictate that all video material on the web must first be approved by a government regulatory body. Providers of internet audio and video services "must serve socialist ideals and the Chinese people."

The new laws aim to prevent 'attacks on national sovereignty' – a catch-all phrase regularly used to charge people without giving an explanation of their 'crime' and imprison them for long periods, denying information to their lawyers and preventing a fair trial.

Press freedom organisation Reporters Without Borders calls the new regulations "an unprecedented act of censorship".



SIGN POSTED AT THE ENTRANCE OF AN INTERNET CAFÉ. THE TOP CARTOON READS, "YOU SHOULD NOT SPREAD ANTISOCIAL MATERIAL ON THE INTERNET". THE BOTTOM ONE READS, "PLEASE COME WITH ME BECAUSE YOU PUBLISHED MATERIALS TO HARM THE UNITY OF THE NATION". © ELIZABETH DALZIEL/AP/PA PHOTO

FREE MEDIA – A LEGACY OF THE GAMES?

In 2001, the Chinese Government said the media would have free and unrestricted access to China during the Games, including unrestricted travel throughout the country, not just in Beijing. But as the Games approach, that commitment has not been met and is looking less and less likely.

After recent criticisms Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang told reporters, "The Chinese Government and its people sincerely welcome reporters from around the world to cover the Olympic Games and cover China in a fair and objective way. This position will not change".

What this will mean in reality is still unknown. Minister of the State Council Information Office, Cai Wu, is reported to have said that the government will provide comprehensive services to foreign media "with timely dissemination of more authoritative information."

Will this 'authoritative information' extend to true statistics on the use of the death penalty, methods of torture, numbers of people imprisoned without trial or a comprehensive list of censored words, topics and websites?

What is not being said is that any improvements for foreign media have not and most likely will not apply to domestic journalists in China. Travel restrictions, threats, surveillance, publication closures, deleting of blogs and self-censorship are still daily realities for Chinese journalists.

And while Chinese writers and journalists are in prison for peacefully expressing their opinion online or in print, the International Olympic Committee is praising China for meeting its commitment on media access.

'Free and unrestricted media access' must apply to domestic and foreign journalists equally and must continue beyond the day the foreign cameras leave Beijing.

SOPHIE PEER, CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

CHINA GROUP

Get together with your friends and find out more about human rights in China and then take action to support human rights.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO IN MARCH AND APRIL

WATCH A FILM YOU WOULDN'T SEE IN CHINA: *PRISONERS IN FREEDOM CITY*

This documentary was made by Hu Jia and Zeng Jinyan and was shot largely through the windows of the couple's Beijing apartment while they were under house arrest for more than 200 days in 2007. The couple were subsequently detained at Beijing airport on their way to Europe to show the film. Order a copy of this unique insight into life under house arrest through your local Amnesty International office. The dvd comes with notes and no doubt there'll be plenty of discussion. You can also take action on behalf of the couple – see page 4.

READ: *INSIDE THE RED MANSION: ON THE TRAIL OF CHINA'S MOST WANTED MAN*, BY OLIVER AUGUST

This non-fiction book is based on the author's seven years in Beijing working as the *Times of London* bureau chief. He became intrigued by farmer-turned-billionaire gangster, Lai Changxing, a man variously regarded as Robin Hood, the Chinese Gatsby or an enemy of the state. *Inside the Red Mansion* is a chronicle of August's pursuit of the outlaw.

READ: *THE LAST CHINESE CHEF*, BY NICOLE MONES

A *New York Times* bestseller, *The last Chinese chef* gives armchair travellers an insight into Chinese food and culture that you can almost taste. The novel follows recently-widowed *Table* magazine columnist Maggie McElroy to Beijing, where she meets Sam, who is auditioning to be on the national cooking team for the Olympic Games in Beijing.

USE YOUR INTERNET FREEDOM

Our brand new **China website launches on 31 March**. Be among the first to add your support – a message of hope for China or maybe a picture of you and your friends supporting human rights – wearing your sports gear of course! There will be actions, case studies, interesting articles and lots of ways to affect positive change in China.

BE PART OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

We are hosting fun events and actions in the next few months. Can you help out at a speaker's night, wear a swimming cap in public, paint a banner or show people what internet censorship looks like?

To join in contact your nearest Action Centre and let us know how you would like to be involved – go to www.amnesty.org.au and click 'in your area' for contact details.

WHAT IS THE CHINA CAMPAIGN ABOUT?

We want to see lasting human right improvements in China, not just changes on the surface or for the three weeks of the Olympic Games. The campaign globally has four key parts. They are:

- End online censorship
- Abolish the death penalty
- Stop torture
- Freedom for human rights defenders

Read more about the issues on our website www.amnesty.org.au/china.



ZENG JINYAN UNDER HOUSE ARREST.

© HU JIA AND ZENG JINYAN

SILENCING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Beijing couple Hu Jia and his wife Zeng Jinyan are peaceful human rights activists, documentary makers and parents of a newborn child. They know from experience how government repression of their constitutional right to freedom of expression impacts on daily life.

Some of the couple's recent events:

18 May 2007

Hu Jia and Zeng Jinyan are detained by police at Beijing airport on their way to Europe to share their human rights experiences, and banned from leaving the country.

10 November 2007

Hu Jia is beaten by police officers while trying to visit his wife in hospital shortly before the birth of their baby.

27 December 2007

Around 30 police officers break into the couple's home. Hu Jia is detained on suspicion of 'inciting subversion of state power'. At least 10 police officers are stationed inside the family's home until 31 December. Police block Zeng Jinyan's phone and internet lines; confiscate their computer, mobile phones, video, camera, fax machine, bankbooks and cash cards; remove address books and documents and freeze the couple's bank accounts.

January 2008

Municipal and district police officers and vehicles surround the home and Zeng Jinyan is under constant surveillance.

5 January 2008

The police check Hu Jia's parents when they visit their daughter-in-law and grandchild, to ensure they are not leaving with any documents about their son's arrest that they could pass to the media.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Act now to defend Hu Jia's human rights. Call on authorities to treat him and his wife fairly and humanely and for such crackdowns on peaceful human rights defenders to cease.

Send an email to the Minister of Justice of the People's Republic of China, Wu Aiyong, at Buzhang_minister@legalinfo.gov.cn, urging the authorities to:

- Disclose where Hu Jia is being held and to release him immediately and unconditionally unless he is charged with a recognisable offence.
- Give Hu Jia immediate access to his lawyer, members of his family and any medical treatment he may require.
- Stop police surveillance and harassment of Zeng Jinyan and allow her to contact the outside world in line with her fundamental human rights to freedom of movement, expression and association.
- Guarantee that Hu Jia and Zeng Jinyan will not be subjected to beatings or other forms of torture or ill-treatment.
- Ensure that all human rights defenders are able to conduct their peaceful and legitimate activities without fear of arbitrary detention, torture or ill-treatment or other human rights violations.
- Express deep concern that detention without trial of human rights activists runs counter to promises made by numerous Chinese officials that human rights would improve in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics.



HU JIA AND ZENG JINYAN WITH THEIR BABY, 16 NOVEMBER.

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All our work campaigning against human rights violations is funded by individuals.

You can help fund our work by calling **1300 300 920** or by visiting www.amnesty.org.au

And get involved in our China campaign by contacting your local Action Centre on **1300 300 920**.

THIS DOCUMENT WOULD BE BANNED IN CHINA ... WHEN YOU FINISH READING THE *CHINA CAMPAIGN NEWS* WHY NOT PASS IT ON TO A FRIEND?