

URGENT ACTION

TIANANMEN “BAIJIU” ACTIVIST SENTENCED TO JAIL

Sichuan activist Chen Bing was sentenced to three and a half years after he and three other activists were convicted of “inciting subversion of state power” for producing and promoting their own *baijiu* – Chinese liquor – to commemorate the Tiananmen crackdown.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President of the People's Republic of China
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Dear President Xi,

Sichuan activist **Chen Bing** was sentenced to three and a half years on 4 April 2019 after he and three other activists – **Fu Hailu, Zhang Junyong** and **Luo Fuyu** – were convicted of “inciting subversion of state power” for producing and promoting their own *baijiu* (a popular Chinese liquor) that commemorated the 27th anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown. Fu Hailu, Zhang Junyong and Luo Fuyu were each given suspended sentences on 1-3 April. All of them have been detained for nearly three years.

According to the indictment, the activists used the labels and the “commemoration wine” (*jinian-jiu*) to “promote the June 4th incident on the internet”. Chen Bing, Zhang Junyong and Luo Fuyu spent 9000 yuan (US\$1300) to buy the wine, bottles and bottle caps in a supermarket in Sichuan and used the labels which translate into “Remember, Eight Liquor June 4” (*mingji baijiu liusi*) echoing the date of 4 June 1989 and “27-year-old private reserve, not-for-sale”. Between 28 May and 21 June 2016, public security officers detained the four activists and found 900 sets of empty bottles and bottle caps.

Chen Bing's friends believe that Chen Bing is the only one among the four activists who was not given a suspended sentence because he did not admit to the offence. However, although Fu Hailu, Zhang Junyong and Lu Fuyu were each sentenced to three years imprisonment, suspended for five years and four years respectively, they will be effectively silenced during the suspended sentence period, according to the previous experiences of detained activists.

Therefore, we call on you to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Chen Bing as he only exercised his right to freedom of expression, which is protected both by international conventions that the Chinese government signed and the PRC Constitution;
- Ensure that Chen Bing is not subjected to any torture or other ill-treatment and has regular and unrestricted access to and is able to communicate with a lawyer of his choice and his family members, without interference unless justified in line with international human rights law.

Yours sincerely,

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In April 1989, protests led by university students in Beijing who had gathered initially to mourn senior Communist Party official Hu Yaobang quickly spread across the country. The students demanded an end to corruption by officials and called for political and economic reforms. Their demands drew wide public support. Peaceful demonstrations took place in Beijing and throughout China. The authorities failed to persuade the demonstrators to return home. As tensions escalated in Beijing, martial law was declared on 20 May 1989.

On the night of 3 June 1989, heavily armed troops and hundreds of armoured vehicles moved into the city to 'clear' the pro-democracy demonstrators. Many individuals, including children and elderly people, were shot dead by troops. By 4 June 1989, the troops took full control of Beijing.

An official report issued by the Chinese authorities at the end of June 1989 claimed that "more than 3,000 civilians were wounded and over 200, including 36 college students, died during the riot". The report also stated that several dozen soldiers died. Yet the government has never accepted responsibility for the human rights violations during the military crackdown or held any perpetrator legally accountable. With each year that passes, justice becomes ever more elusive for family members of the hundreds if not thousands who were killed or injured in Beijing and across China.

Immediately after the military crackdown, the authorities began to hunt down those involved in the demonstrations. Many civilians were detained, tortured, or imprisoned after unfair trials. Many were charged with 'counter-revolutionary' crimes. 'Counter-revolutionary' offences were removed from the Criminal Law in 1997, yet the cases of those already jailed for these offences such as those involved in the 1989 pro-democracy protests were not reviewed.

The government's hard-line stance towards reassessing the Tiananmen crackdown can be seen in how it treats the people who have bravely tried to commemorate the event such as the Tiananmen Mothers, an advocacy group composed mainly of parents whose children were killed in the 1989 military crackdown. These individuals face restrictions on their movement, harassment, and surveillance. Jiang Peikun, the husband of Ding Zilin and one of the founders of the Tiananmen Mothers, died in 2015 before he was able to see justice for his son Jiang Jielian, who was shot through the heart on the night of 3 June 1989. The last known person in detention for activities directly related to the 1989 military crackdown, Miao Deshun, was released from prison in October 2016.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Chinese, English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [30 05 2019]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Chen Bing (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/6262/2017/en/>