

# APPEALS FOR JUSTICE

*Despite official surveillance, harassment, and detention, Chinese voices have continued courageously to raise appeals for accountability and justice over the past 19 years. These voices include the Tiananmen Mothers, a group of June Fourth victims and their families; Dr. Jiang Yanyong, a People's Liberation Army (PLA) surgeon who treated the wounded in 1989; intellectuals, scholars, and hundreds of ordinary Chinese citizens. Below are excerpts selected from some of the countless petitions, open letters and appeals to the Chinese authorities. They are testaments to the spirit, courage, and conscience of the Chinese people.*

## TIANANMEN MOTHERS' OPEN LETTERS

“Speak the truth, refuse to forget, seek justice, call upon conscience.”

Under the banner of the rights defender group Tiananmen Mothers, those wounded during the crackdown and the families of those who were killed or disappeared have come together to contest official claims about what really happened in 1989. The Tiananmen Mothers provide support to each other and work together to gather information. They have made several demands over the past 12 years, including:

- 1) A full investigation into the crackdown;
- 2) A public accounting and appropriate restitution;
- 3) Prosecution of those responsible;
- 4) Reassessment of the 1989 Democracy Movement; and, most recently,
- 5) Dialogue with the authorities.

Below are a few excerpts from their recent public statements:

[W]e are disappointed that our requests, year after year, have come to nothing . . . [T]he government has repeatedly refused dialogue with the victims' family members, how can [it] face the whole world? Is it really possible that, as the host of the 2008 Olympic Games, the government can be at ease allowing athletes from all over the world to tread on this piece of blood-stained soil and participate in the Olympics?<sup>1</sup> (Open letter, February 2008)

令我们失望的是，时间一年又一年过去，我们的要求却照例一年又一年落空……一再拒绝同受害者亲属进行对话的政府，将何以面对全世界的众目睽睽！作为本届奥运会的东道主，难道能够如此心安理得地让全世界的体育健儿们踩着一块血迹未干的土地参加赛事吗？！（公开信，2008年2月）

In the model plays of the Cultural Revolution, there is a song lyric that goes, “Hatred in the heart must send forth shoots.” For us, too, hatred sends forth shoots, but the shoots growing from us are not those of revenge, but rather those that seek peace, justice, and tranquility.<sup>2</sup> (Roundtable, May 2007)

文革样板戏中有句唱词：“仇恨入心要发芽”；对于我们来说，同样是“仇恨入心”，同样要“发芽”，但是这个“芽”长出来的不是偏狭的报复心，而应该是寻求公平、正义的平常心。（讨论会，2007年5月）

A just and reasonable resolution of the June Fourth question is an inevitable trend, and is what the people desire.<sup>3</sup> (Open letter, February 2007)

公正、合理解决“六四”问题，是大势所趋，人心所向……（公开信，2007年2月）

We ask the French—you who have consciences, who have the glorious tradition of democracy: Please open your eyes. Use the freedom of expression that you enjoy as citizens. Protest the disgraceful behavior of politicians who serve as accomplices in evil. If you do so, you will be friends, worthy of respect in the hearts and minds of the Chinese people.<sup>4</sup> (Open letter in *Le Figaro*, March 2005)

有良知的法国人民，有光荣的民主传统的法国人民，请你们睁开眼睛，利用你们已经享有的公民的言论自由，反对政客们助纣为虐的可耻行为。如果你们这样做了，在中国人民的心目中你们将是值得尊敬的朋友。（公开信，2005年3月）

The June Fourth Incident, which has caused the Chinese people deep pain, happened almost seven years ago. Seven years ago, the People’s Congress Standing Committee, acting as the nation’s institution of highest authority, failed to listen to the voice of the people, and allowed the armed forces to drench Beijing in a bloodbath. After the incident, they also failed to face the aftermath squarely, and make prompt reparations. This disappoints us deeply.<sup>5</sup> (Open letter, June 1996)

给中国人民带来巨大伤痛的“六四”事件过去快七年了。七年前，作为国家最高权力机构的人大常委会，未能顺应民意，阻止军队对首都学生和和平居民的血腥屠杀，事件发生后，又未能正视事件带来的惨重后果，及时处理善后事宜。这不能不令我们深感失望。（公开信，1996年6月）

## SARS HERO'S CALL FOR REASSESSMENT OF JUNE FOURTH<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Jiang Yanyong, who became famous in 2003 for revealing the SARS epidemic cover-up, wrote an open letter to top government officials in 2004, explaining what he witnessed in June 1989 and calling for a reassessment. Parts of his letter are excerpted below.

To: Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the National People's Congress (NPC)  
 Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)  
 Members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee Political Bureau  
 Premier and Vice-Premiers of the State Council

[...] I am a surgeon at the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Number 301 Hospital, and when June Fourth took place in 1989, I was the director of the hospital's general surgery department. . . . I have been a surgeon for more than 30 years, and while a member of the medical team of the PLA Railway Corps . . . , I had faced groups of injured workers, but those injuries had resulted from inevitable accidents. . . . Lying before my eyes now in the grand Chinese capital of Beijing were ordinary citizens killed by their own soldiers. . . .

[...] On the evening of June 3, not one of the medical workers in our hospital who took part in saving lives had imagined that such an inexplicable tragedy could occur.

[...] Recently, I read the book, *Sheng Zhe yu Si Zhe: Weile Zhongguo de Mingtian* [生者与死者：为了中国的明天], written by Ding Zilin of the Tiananmen Mothers. [Ding and other family members of the victims] have used a variety of means to express their wish—demanding that the government should seriously and responsibly explain to them the killing of their family members, which is an entirely reasonable request. Who among us does not have parents, children, brothers and sisters? Who would have an innocent family member killed and not voice the same demand? Any Party member, Chinese citizen, and human being must courageously support their just demand.

[...] Our party must address the errors it has made, and the earlier and more thoroughly these errors are resolved, the better. I believe that a correct assessment of June Fourth is what the people want, and that it will not cause unrest among the people.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter.

My address: No. 26, Zhuge Zhuang, Wanshou Road, 5-1204

[Signed] Jiang Yanyong, Department of Surgery, Beijing 301 Hospital

[Dated] February 24, 2004

全国人民代表大会常务委员会委员长及副委员长  
全国政协主席及副主席  
中共中央政治局各位委员  
国务院总理及副总理：

……

我是解放军301医院的一位外科医生，89年六四时我是普通外科的主任……我当外科医生已30多年，到铁道兵修成昆铁路的医疗队参加抢救工作时，也曾遇到过成批的伤员，但那都是……不可避免的意外事故所造成的。而眼前，在堂堂的中国首都北京，在我面前躺着的，却是被中国人民子弟兵用人民给予的武器残杀了的自己的人民……

……

在6月3日晚上，我们医院的每一位参加抢救的医护人员都万万没想到会出现这种使正常人无法理解的惨事……

……

最近读了“天安门母亲”丁子霖写的《为了中国的明天——生者与死者》一书，使我清楚地知道了，她作为一个在六四事件中被残杀的17岁的热血青年的母亲，十多年来经受了各种压力，忍受了极大的痛苦。她和难属们千方百计寻找和联系了近二百位死难和致残者的家属，并以各种方式表达他们的愿望——要求政府对他们的亲属被无辜杀害作出认真负责的交代——这是一个十分合情合理的要求。谁没有父母、子女、兄弟姐妹？谁的亲人被这样无辜杀害，都会象他们一样提出这种要求。作为一个共产党员、一个中国人、一个人，都应该理直气壮地支持他们的正义要求……

……

我们党犯的错误应该靠党自己来解决，解决得越早，越彻底越好。我相信，正确地评定六四是人心所向，绝不会造成人心紊乱。

……

信如收到，请告我。

我的地址：万寿路朱各庄26号，5-1204

北京301医院外科 蒋彦永

2004年2月24日

## 192 CHINESE CITIZENS OF CONSCIENCE

On November 5, 2002, HRIC received a copy of an open letter to the 16th Party Congress signed by 192 opposition activists from 17 provinces and cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, which called for a reassessment of June Fourth and rehabilitation of Zhao Ziyang.<sup>7</sup> The signatories of the open letter include former political prisoner Pu Yong, who died on November 2. Informed sources say Pu Yong wished to participate in the open letter as his last opportunity to express his political demands. Below is an excerpt from this letter.

To the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China: We are raising these ideas and suggestions because we firmly believe that the various problems embedded in China's society have all been caused by a single-party dictatorship. The only way to resolve contradictions and settle societal crisis is through systemic reform and political democratization. [...] Thus, as a collective body of Chinese citizens who abide by our consciences, we deeply hope that the ruling party will take on this historical task with both courage and reason: through reform, we can atone for past grievances, remold China's image, promote the modernization and globalization of China, and establish a China with a free, democratic, unified, and prosperous future.<sup>8</sup> (Open letter, November 2002)

Citizens of China (192 Persons)

中共中央，我们之所以提出这些意见和建议，是因为我们确信中国社会目前所严重存在的种种问题归根结底都是由一党集权所造成的，唯有通过政体改革、实行政治民主化才是解决各种矛盾、化解社会危机的根本出路……因此，作为一群信守良知的中国公民，我们真切地希望执政党能够理智而勇敢地担当起这一历史重任，通过改革将功补过，通过改革重塑形象，通过改革推动中国的现代化和全球化，通过改革开创中华民族自由、民主、统一、繁荣的未来！（公开信，2002年11月）

中国公民（共计192人）

## 45 CHINESE SCHOLARS AND INTELLECTUALS

In May of 1995, the United Nations Year for Tolerance, a group of 45 prominent Chinese scholars and intellectuals issued a joint appeal letter calling for more tolerance in China.

Turning our gaze to our own ancient culture, a lack of tolerance for dissenting voices has persisted for thousands of years right down to the present day with no sign of weakening. In 1955, Hu Feng and several of his cohorts were charged with the crime of “forming a counterrevolutionary clique” after they submitted a letter stating their views on literature and art, and over 2,000 others were also implicated. In 1957, those intellectuals who blindly responded to the [Party’s] call for a “rectification of work style and an airing of views” were all branded as “Rightists.” Their numbers accounted for more than 11 percent (at least 550,000 people) of all the intellectuals in China. As for the ten-year calamity beginning in 1966 when a “revolution” in culture was staged, that was an even greater national disaster in which dissent was completely wiped out. After 1978, the situation changed somewhat. False accusations were largely redressed, a more relaxed situation began to appear and the economy began to develop rapidly. But due to a lack of the tolerance that is essential to modernization and “reform and opening up,” in the true sense of those terms, there resulted the events of June 4, 1989, that human tragedy that shocked the world, as well as subsequent incidents that violated citizens’ basic rights.

To mark the United Nations Year of Tolerance, we should do our utmost to propagate tolerance, which is necessary to modern civilization, and strive for the true implementation in our country of the United Nations’ goal to “promote and encourage respect for the human rights and basic freedoms of all mankind” as stipulated in the United Nations Charter.<sup>9</sup> (Letter of appeal, May 1995)

反观我们这个文明古国，几千年来定于一尊，不容有第二种声音的遗风至今未衰。一九五五年，由于上书陈述自己的文艺观点，胡风及其同伴被作为“反革命集团”定罪，受牵连者二千余人。一九五七年，响应“整风鸣放”号召敢于直言的知识分子统统被打成“右派”，人数占全国知识分子的百分之十一以上（至少五十万人）。至于一九六六年开始的对文化进行“革命”的十年浩劫，更是一场消灭异己的民众大灾难。一九七八年以后情况有所改变，上述冤假错案基本上得到平反，初步出现了宽松局面，经济开始高速发展。可是，由于缺乏实现真正意义上的改革开放和现代化所必须的宽容精神，结果还是导致了一九八九年“六四”那场震惊世界的人间惨剧，以及随后一系列侵犯公民基本权利事件。

为迎接联合国宽容年，我们当尽力传播现代文明所不可缺少的宽容精神，促使“联合国宪章”所规定的“增进并激励对于全体人类的人权和基本自由的尊重”这一联合国宗旨在我国真正落实。（公开信，1995年5月）

## CHINESE DISSIDENTS' SIXTH ANNIVERSARY APPEAL

On May 31, 1995, Wang Zhihong, Wang Dan, Bao Zunxin, Liu Nianchun, Liu Xiaobo, Jiang Qisheng and several other intellectuals issued a letter entitled: “Drawing from a Lesson Paid for in Blood, The Process of Promoting Democracy and Rule of Law—An Appeal on the Sixth Anniversary of June Fourth.”

Reflecting on June Fourth, we believe that a major cause for the tragic bloodshed was the inability of the governing authorities to confront and adapt to global tides of openness, diversification, and democratization. They do not resolve China’s social problems through democracy and rule of law. They still maintain an autocratic mentality, regarding politically-involved citizens as enemies. On the sixth anniversary of June Fourth, we implore every citizen of China, especially governing authorities who have implemented errors in their policy decisions, to rethink this tragedy with an attitude of repentance, reason, and responsibility. Learn from this—a lesson soaked in fresh blood—so that during this period of change, China can avoid getting stuck in a tragic rut.

The tragedy of June Fourth warns government leaders that they must not only abide by the constitution published in 1982, but even more importantly, they must formulate a series of laws on the basis of and in accordance with the constitution. This will create a government with laws for the people to follow, and allow for citizens’ constitutional rights to be protected by feasible, detailed, and clear laws. It would also allow for all disputes involving citizens’ rights to have an independent judicial system, with constitutional courts that make impartial decisions.

The Chinese people have met with many tribulations on their journey toward a modern democratic society. June Fourth is one instance of enormous suffering. Even so, if we have the awareness, wisdom, courage, faith, and will to examine our own bleeding wounds, suffering becomes precious wealth. A country that has experienced such hardship is rich, deep, and brimming with hope. (Open letter, May 1995)<sup>10</sup>

纵观“六四”的全过程，我们认为造成流血大悲剧的最主要的原因之一是：执政当局无法面对和适应开放、多元、民主化的世界潮流，没有通过民主和法治的程序解决中国的社会问题，仍然以敌人意识和专制心态看待公民的参政行为。值此“六四”六周年之际，我们吁请中华民族的每位公民、特别是做出错误决策的执政当局，以一种忏悔、理性、负责的态度来反思这场悲剧，汲取被鲜血浸透的教训，以避免处在转型期的中国重蹈类似悲剧的覆辙。

“六四”悲剧告诫执政者，政府不仅要遵守1982年颁行的宪法，更要在宪法的基础上制订一系列与之相配套的宪法性法律、基本法律、法律。使政府的行为有法可依，使公民的宪法权利得到切实、具体、明确的法律保障，使所有涉及公民权利的纠纷都能由独立的司法系统乃至宪法法院给予公正的解决。

中华民族在走向现代民主社会的过程中曾历经磨难，“六四”是又一次大磨难。然而，如果我们有足够的良知、智慧、勇气、信心和毅力面对泣血的伤口自省，那么苦难就是最宝贵的财富，一个历经磨难的民族就是富有的、深邃的、充满希望的。（公开信，1995年5月）

## Notes

1. Human Rights in China, “Chinese Authorities Should Respond to Calls for Dialogue by the Tiananmen Mothers,” February 27, 2008, <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/47439>.
2. Human Rights in China, “Tiananmen Mothers Roundtable Calls for Official Accountability,” May 31, 2007, <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/39867>.
3. Human Rights in China, “Tiananmen Mothers Call for End to Censorship over June 4th Crackdown,” February 27, 2007, <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/33852>.
4. Ding Zilin, Liu Xiaobo, Yu Jie [丁子霖、刘晓波、余杰], “An Open Letter to the People of France: The European Union’s Lifting of the Arms Embargo on China Will Only Encourage Tyranny” [致法国人民的公开信—欧盟解除对华武器禁运是对暴政的鼓励], Boxun [博讯论坛], March 21, 2005, <http://peacehall.com/forum/boxun2005a/224584.shtml>.
5. “An Open Letter from Ding Zilin and 31 June Fourth Victims and Family Members to the People’s Congress Standing Committee” [丁子霖等31位六四难属发表给全国人大常委会公开信], Chinese News Digest [中国新闻电脑网络], June 4, 1996, <http://museums.cnd.org/HXWZ/ZK96/zk90.hz8.html>.
6. For the full text of the open letter in English, see “SARS Hero’s Call For Reassessment of June 4th,” *China Rights Forum* 2 (2004), <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/10029>.
7. A former premier of the People’s Republic of China, Zhao Ziyang was purged for his sympathetic stance toward the students involved in June Fourth. He spent the last 15 years of his life under house arrest.
8. Human Rights in China [中国人权], “192 Sign Joint Letter Urging 16th National Congress to Re-evaluate June 4” [十七省市反对派人士联署致十六大公开信促重新评价六四], November 5, 2002, <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/15205>.
9. Human Rights in China, “Statement: Greeting the United Nations Year of Tolerance; Appealing for the Realization of Tolerance in China,” May 15, 1995, available at: <http://museums.cnd.org/CND-Global/CND-Global.95.2nd/CND-Global.95-06-02.html>.
10. “Learning from A Lesson Paid for in Blood, The Process of Promoting Democracy and Rule of Law—An Appeal on the Sixth Anniversary of June Fourth” [汲取血的教训, 推进民主与法治进程—“六·四”六周年呼吁书], May 31, 1995, *Chinese News Digest* [中国新闻电脑网络], <http://museums.cnd.org/HXWZ/ZK95/zk58.hz8.html>.