

Human Rights Without Frontiers remembers Tiananmen square: 25 years on

Press release

HRWF (03.06.2014) - In the early part of 1989, a growing Freedom Movement multiplied in many towns and cities across the People's Republic of China. Peaceful protests spread throughout the country, calling for freedom, justice and democracy. Finally, on 4th June 1989 the world watched on in horror as hundreds, if not thousands, of unarmed protesters were massacred by government forces in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Many of them were young students and simple labourers.

Ever since, Tiananmen Square has been symbolic of the systematic and often brutal repression of basic freedoms in China. On that day, the country's leadership lost its political legitimacy. Any regime that slaughters its own citizens in order to maintain power cannot hold for long the support of those whom it seeks to govern. That support remains all the more tenuous today.

Human Rights Without Frontiers honours those who lost their lives in Tiananmen Square on this day 25 years ago in the struggle for freedom and human dignity. Regretfully, not much has changed in today's China. The Chinese authorities still restrict basic freedoms of expression and association. Political dissenters are still sent to prison. Religious groups are still limited in the activities they are permitted to undertake. Government-sponsored organ harvesting continues. Female infanticide is still practiced as a result of the country's one-child policy. And the death penalty is widely administered.

The Tiananmen Square protesters believed that their actions would bring in a new day for freedom and democracy in their country. Sadly, they were wrong. The dream was crushed on that day; however, the yearning for freedom still remains. Until the Chinese Communist Party abandons its mythical project of creating a monochrome state where everyone thinks and believes the same, there will continue to be deep resentment, dissent and societal unrest. For China to flourish and know stability as a nation, it will be necessary to enact vital democratic reforms at all levels of government and society. If China fails in this project, the People's Republic will ultimately succumb to the dream of freedom that remains strong in the hearts of its own people.