

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: ASA 17/020/2010
30 April 2010

China: Disappearance of Mongolian activist a serious concern

On the last day of the UN meeting of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Amnesty International today expresses its concern at the disappearance in Beijing of an ethnic Mongolian activist invited by the UN to participate in the two week meeting in New York.

Mr Sodmongol has been active in promoting the rights of ethnic Mongolians in China. He had cleared customs in Beijing on April 18 and was waiting for his flight to New York when he was taken away.

Indigenous activists attending the Forum have become increasingly concerned for his safety.

According to a statement made by the Asia Indigenous Peoples' caucus at the Forum, this is the second time the Chinese authorities have arrested indigenous Mongolian representatives to prevent them from attending the Forum.

Two years ago, Mr. Naranbilig was also arrested by the Chinese authorities and put under one year house arrest after a 20-day detention in his attempt to attend the Forum. The authorities confiscated his passport and barred him from attending any future international events.

Amnesty International is concerned about the implications of Mr Sodmongol's disappearance for delegates seeking to participate in the Forum's activities. Thousands of Indigenous peoples attend the Forum every year to discuss strategies for overcoming discrimination in their home states. Much attention is directed at their desire to enjoy their indigenous languages, and culture and efforts to resist invasive developments, such as extractive industries, on their traditional lands.

Mr Sodmongol's disappearance will be seen as an effort to undermine Indigenous global activism and the UN Forum's important work on promoting indigenous rights.