

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Media Briefing

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World: 2007 Death Penalty statistics, notes and case studies

IN COMPARISON WITH 2006

| 2007 Reports of Executions | | 2006 Reports of Executions | |
|----------------------------|------|----------------------------|-------|
| CHINA | 470+ | CHINA | 1010+ |
| IRAN | 317+ | IRAN | 177 |
| SAUDI ARABIA | 143+ | PAKISTAN | 82 |
| PAKISTAN | 135+ | IRAQ | 65+ |
| USA | 42 | SUDAN | 65 |
| IRAQ | 33+ | USA | 53 |
| VIET NAM | 25+ | SAUDI ARABIA | 39+ |
| YEMEN | 15+ | YEMEN | 30+ |
| AFGHANISTAN | 15 | VIET NAM | 14 |
| LIBYA | 9+ | KUWAIT | 10+ |

If AI knows that there were executions but does not know how many, we are indicating it with “+”.

During 2007, at least 1,252 people were executed in 24 countries. At least 3,347 people were sentenced to death in 51 countries.

During 2006, at least 1,591 people were executed in 25 countries. At least 3,861 people were sentenced to death in 55 countries.

As in previous years, the vast majority of executions worldwide in 2006 were carried out in a small handful of countries. In 2006, 91 per cent of all known executions took place in six countries: China, Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Sudan and the USA.

2007 DEATH PENALTY CASE STUDIES

CHINA

In July 2007 Zheng Xiaoyu, former head of China's State Food and Drug Administration, was executed for taking bribes and dereliction of duty. Executions are commonly carried out by a bullet to the back of the head and, increasingly, lethal injection. Many of China's capital crimes, around 68 in total, are non-violent, including tax evasion, smuggling and organizing prostitution.

SAUDI ARABIA

Mustafa Ibrahim was executed in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, for alleged practice of sorcery, witchcraft and desecration of the Quran. Official reports state that they had received complaints from a man who alleged that Mustafa Ibrahim was practising sorcery upon him in order to separate him from his wife. The reports state that he had confessed to all these charges. He was sentenced to death

in May and his beheading took place in November. In a letter addressed to the President of the Saudi Arabian Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International expressed concern that he was convicted and sentenced to death on the basis of a confession obtained under torture, and that he was denied access to legal assistance and legal representation. The organization called for commutation of the death penalty against Mustafa Ibrahim and other prisoners but received no response.

VIET NAM

British citizen Le Manh Luong, born 1960, had his death sentence commuted to life imprisonment last month, March 2008, by Vietnamese president Nguyen Minh Triet. Le Manh Luong was facing execution by firing squad after being sentenced to death in November 2006 for heroin trafficking, a sentence upheld on final appeal in April 2007. While on death row, he had reportedly been shackled by the wrists and ankles. Following a war injury he sustained as a child, Le Manh Luong is suffering from brain damage. Reports suggested he had difficulty understanding the court proceedings against him.

VIDEO FOOTAGE OF DEATH ROW SURVIVORS

Amnesty has video footage from former death row inmates. Video material is also available relating to the call for the abolition of the death penalty to the UN in November 2007, and demonstration footage from a World Congress against the Death Penalty meeting in Paris, France, in February 2007. These can be viewed on YouTube but for broadcast quality footage, please contact: +44 20 7413 5566 or email avproduction@amnesty.org

UGANDA

Mpagi Edward Edmary spent 18 years on death row in Uganda. He was arrested at the age of 27 in 1981 and sentenced to death in 1982 for the murder of a neighbour. But there was no murder. It transpired that the neighbour was still alive but that his family held a grudge against Edward's parents and had staged the murder to hurt them. This was confirmed in 1989 but Mpagi remained on death row for a further 11 years before finally being released. While on death row he counted 52 fellow inmates taken for execution.

To hear Mpagi Edward Edmary speaking about his experience, see <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=5MXOaEzagW0>

USA

Since 1976, more than 120 people have been released from US death rows on grounds of innocence. Three such cases were added to the list during 2007, and the most recent occurred this month, April 2008, when Glen Chapman walked free in North Carolina. He had spent more than a dozen years on death row for two 1992 murders before a judge granted him a retrial in 2007. On 2 April 2008, prosecutors dismissed charges against him. The 100th such case, as recorded by the Death Penalty Information Center in Washington, DC, was that of Ray Krone in Arizona. He was arrested on New Year's Eve in 1991, aged 35, for the rape and murder of a woman in Phoenix. He had no criminal record. He was convicted on circumstantial evidence and after an expert witness testified that Krone's teeth matched bite marks on the victim. Three years after he was sentenced to death, he received a new trial, but was again convicted and this time sentenced to life imprisonment. He continued to maintain his innocence and in 2001 there was a breakthrough when DNA testing excluded Krone and implicated another man as the assailant. Ray Krone was released on 8 April 2002.

To hear Ray Krone speaking about his experience, see <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=Fz35tNT-Zt8&feature=user>

CLIP - AI URGES THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY WORLDWIDE, NOVEMBER 2007

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=QunkYVpaAdo&feature=user>

CLIP FROM WORLD CONGRESS AGAINST DEATH PENALTY, PARIS, FEBRUARY 2007

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtlAorV1gg4>

Comments from

Piers Bannister, Amnesty International, (in English)

Antoine Alexiev, Lawyer (in French)

Sakae Menda Exonerated death row prisoner (in Japanese)

Joaquin José Martinez, Exonerated death row prisoner (in Spanish)

Teng Biao, Lawyer (in Chinese)

JAPAN

INTERVIEW BEING FINALISED FOR YOUTUBE, READY FOR 15 APRIL

Sakae Menda was the first prisoner on death row to be exonerated in Japan – 34 years after he was sentenced to death for the murder of two people. He was arrested in 1949, aged 22, but his release only finally came in 1983. While on death row he says he saw about 35 inmates taken away for execution.

Public Document

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