

**EXTERNAL**

**AI Index: ASA 17/03/97**

**UA 16/97**

**Death penalty**

**17 January 1997**

**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA  
company director**

**Wang Xizhong,**

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**Wang Xizhong, director of a municipal trust company was reportedly sentenced to death by Lianyungang City Intermediate people's Court in Jiangsu province on 16 January 1997 for allegedly embezzling more than 100 million yuan (\$12 million).**

**It is not known whether Wang Xizhong has yet appealed against his death sentence. Under Chinese law, defendants have between three and 10 days after the passing of sentence to appeal to a higher court. If no appeal is lodged, the sentence will be automatically referred for review to Jiangsu Provincial High People's Court. This court must then rule on the appeal or review the case within one and a half months. Successful appeals are rare. The death sentence should be approved by the Supreme People's Court.**

**Wang Xizhong was convicted of embezzlement, misappropriation of public funds, neglect of duty and bribery. He was accused of using his position in another company, as general manager of the Liangyungang municipal economic development company, to embezzle money with a Hong Kong accomplice. It is not clear who the alleged accomplice was, or if he has also been sentenced. Reportedly, most of the money has now been recovered by the authorities (85.7 million Yuan).**

**According to press reports, Wang Xizhong has been in detention for almost two years, since March 1995. His trial is clearly part of the ongoing high profile anti-crime crackdown - the 'Strike Hard Campaign' - which began on 28 April 1996. The campaign, which has been extended to include a 'Winter Action', includes a crackdown on corruption which has resulted in the investigation of more than 34,000 cases, according to official figures in autumn 1996.**

**Amnesty International is concerned about the thousands of executions carried out since the start of the current anti-crime crackdown. The organization is also concerned about the increasing use of the death penalty for non-violent crimes, including economic offences.**

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**The death penalty is used extensively in China. In 1995, Amnesty International recorded 3610 death sentences and 2535 executions, although it believes these figures to be well below the actual number of death sentences and executions carried out. The increased use of the death penalty in China since the late 1980s occurs in the context of continuing "anti-crime" campaigns.**

**Amnesty International is concerned that death sentences in China are meted out following trials which fall far short of international standards for fairness. In particular Amnesty International has noted a marked increase in the speedy sentencing and executing of prisoners tried during the current anti-crime crackdown.**

**Amnesty International is also concerned that the use of the death penalty in China appears to be discriminatory; it tends to apply disproportionately to people of low social standing who have neither the social nor the political status enabling others to defend themselves against the accusations. Furthermore, cases have been reported in which death sentences were imposed on the basis of confessions extracted through coercion or torture.**

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or Chinese or in your own language:**

- urging that the death sentence passed on Wang Xizhong be commuted;**
- urging that the arbitrary and massive use of the death penalty in China be stopped and expressing concern over its use for economic and non-violent crimes;**
- calling on the authorities to immediately stop any further executions from occurring as part of the anti-crime crackdown;**
- expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment and as a violation of the right to life as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**

## **APPEALS TO:**

**Governor ZHENG Silin, Jiangsu Provincial People's Government**

**ZHENG Silin Daishengzhang  
Jiangsusheng Renmin Zhengfu**

**29 Xikanglu**  
**Nanjingshi 210024**  
**Jiangsusheng**  
**People's Republic of China**  
**Telegram: Governor, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China**  
**Faxes : +86 25 330 1809 or Beijing Office +86 106 201 2068 / 201 1369**  
**Salutation: Dear Governor**

**President LI Peiyou, Jiangsu Provincial High People's Court**  
**LI Peiyou Yuanzhang**  
**Jiangsusheng Renmin Gaoji Fayuan**  
**75 Ninghailu**  
**Nanjingshi 210024**  
**Jiangsusheng**  
**People's Republic of China**  
**Telegram: President, Provincial High People's Court,**  
**Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China**  
**Salutation: Dear President**

**President of the Supreme People's Court of the People's**  
**Republic of China      REN Jianxin Yuanzhang**  
**Zuigao Renmin Fayuan**  
**27 Dongjiao Min Xiang**  
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**and to diplomatic representatives of the People's Republic**  
**of China accredited to your country**

***PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the***

**International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 March 1997.**