

PUBLIC

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16 June 2000

EXTRA 56/00 Death penalty / Fear of execution

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC) Liu Jun plus ten unnamed people

On 14 June 2000, Liu Jun and ten other unnamed people were sentenced to death by Beijing Number Two Intermediate People's Court. Seven of these people received a death sentence with a two year suspension of execution.

Executions can take place within hours of the death sentence being confirmed and any appeals being rejected. Appeals against the death penalty rarely succeed.

Liu Jun and the three others who received death sentences without reprieve were alleged to have been caught trying to sell one kilogram of heroin. It was stated that Liu Jun was the ringleader.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In China the death penalty is used extensively, arbitrarily and frequently as a result of political interference. There are often mass executions during major events or on public holidays, such as 1 January and the Chinese New Year.

June 26 is the United Nations designated International Anti-Drugs day. Each year China executes scores of people for drug offences on or around this date. In June 1998 Amnesty International recorded 504 death sentences and 285 executions whereas in May 2000 Amnesty recorded 178 death sentences.

Based on incomplete public reports in 1998, Amnesty International recorded at least 2,701 death sentences and at least 1,769 confirmed executions in China. From 1990 to the end of 1998, Amnesty International recorded more than 25,400 death sentences and 16,600 executions. These statistics, however, are believed to fall far short of the real figures, as only a fraction of death sentences and executions carried out in the country are publicly reported. Even based on this limited record, the government continues to execute many more people than the rest of the world put together. Execution is by shooting or lethal injection.

A revision to the Criminal Code in March 1997 confirmed the increasing scope for the use of the death penalty.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Chinese or your own language:

- urging the Chinese authorities to commute the death sentence on Liu Jun and the other four awaiting execution;
- urging that the arbitrary and massive use of the death penalty in China be stopped;
- urging the Chinese government to exclude non violent crimes from the death penalty, as recommended by the United Nations Special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions;
- 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: please note that faxes in China are unreliable and often do not work outside office hours (GMT + 8):

Premier of the People's Republic of China

ZHU Rongji Zongli

Guowuyuan

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Beijingshi 100032

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN

Telegram: Premier Zhu Rongji, Beijing, China

Faxes: + 8610 6 520 5316/467 7046 (c/o Ministry of Justice)

+ 86 10 6 851 2174 (c/o Ministry of Radio, Film and

TV)

Salutation: Your Excellency

President of Beijing Municipal High People's Court

QIN Zhengan Yuanzhang

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Beijingshi 100051

People's Republic of China

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Salutation: Dear President

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and to diplomatic representatives of the People's Republic of China
accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY