

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI Index: ASA 38/003/2003 (Public)
News Service No: 249
30 October 2003

Taiwan: Commute all death sentences as a step to death penalty abolition

Amnesty International welcomes the announcement on Monday (27 October) that the Taiwanese Presidential office and the cabinet is jointly drafting legislation to abolish the death penalty, but calls on the government to commute all death sentences in the interim in order to demonstrate its commitment to abolition of the death penalty.

Commutation and finalization of the draft legislation -- which is expected to be ready for parliamentary review in December -- will be important steps in fulfilling President Chen Shui-bian's recent promise to abolish the death penalty.

In a public statement issued on the same day as the announcement, (Monday, 27 October) Amnesty International had reminded Taiwanese authorities of President Chen's promise on death penalty abolition and called for commutation of all death sentences. Amnesty International is also calling for full and impartial investigations into allegations of torture in the ongoing Hsichih Trio case.

Liu Bing-lang, Su Chien-ho and Chuang Lin-hsun, commonly known as the Hsichih Trio, returned to court for their tenth trial in the same murder case after having spent more than seven years on death row before their acquittal by the Taiwanese High Court in January 2003. However in August 2003 the Supreme Court overturned that verdict, and ordered the case to be returned to the High Court yet again. If found guilty in this new trial, they will again face the death penalty. Amnesty International opposes the use of the death penalty in all cases, as the ultimate cruel and inhuman punishment and violation of the right to life.

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