

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 38/11/96

26 September 1996

Further information on UA 76/95 (ASA 38/02/95, 23 March 1995) and follow-ups (ASA 38/03/95, 20 April; ASA 38/04/95, 25 May; ASA 38/05/95, 8 June; ASA 38/06/95, 1 September, ASA 38/04/96, 10 April) - Death penalty / Legal concern / Fear of imminent execution

TAIWAN (REPUBLIC OF CHINA) Su Chien-ho
Liu Ping-lang
Chuang Lin-hsung

Strong indications surfaced on 18 September 1996 that the three men named above, who have been sentenced to death for robbery, rape and murder, are innocent and that they have been tortured by police into confessing to crimes they did not commit.

The new evidence was provided in a testimony by Wang Wen-chung, brother of another co-defendant in the case, Wang Wen-Hsiao, who was convicted of murder and executed several years ago. Wang Wen-chung was convicted of being an accomplice in the case, and has served a 32-month sentence, following which he completed his military service.

Wang Wen-chung was discharged from the military in June 1996. On 18 September, he spoke publicly about the case for the first time. Wang Wen-chung stated that he was beaten by police officers at Hsichih Police Station into confessing falsely that he was present at the scene of the crime, together with his brother. He said police officers used a lighter to burn his chin and threatened to arrest his mother, until he agreed to sign a confession written by police, incriminating himself as well as the three above-named men. The police also denied him permission to seek the help of a lawyer.

Wang Wen-chung said that, after signing his confession, he was taken to another room in the same police station, where he saw Su Chien-ho tied to a chair while a police officer hit the soles of his feet with a wooden pole. Wang also said he saw Liu Ping-lang being held down in another chair while police used a cattle prod to apply electric shocks to his genitals. Chuang Liu-hsiung was being beaten on the head, Wang said.

Wang added that police visited his mother, and asked her to dissuade her son from speaking out about the case.

Amnesty International believes that Wang Wen-chung's statement is a further strong indication that Su Chien-ho, Liu Ping-lang and Chuang Lin-hsung were tortured into confessing to crimes they did not commit. This reinforces numerous other indications that the investigation into this case was riddled with irregularities, and that the trials which led to the imposition of the death sentences were not in accordance with international standards for fairness.

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

- drawing attention to further indications that Su Chien-ho and his co-defendants were tortured into confessing to crimes they did not commit;
- expressing concern that the investigations into their case were highly irregular and their trials unfair;
- calling for the commutation of their death sentence as a first step towards a full review of their case;

- expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases and urging its abolition in law.

APPEALS TO:

1) President Lee Teng-hui

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Telegrams: President Lee Teng-hui, Taipei, Taiwan

Faxes: + 886 2 311 9574 or 314 0746

Salutation: Dear President

2) Liao Cheng-hao, Minister of Justice

Ministry of Justice

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Salutation: Dear Minister

3) President, Judicial Yuan

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and to diplomatic or other representatives of Taiwan in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 November 1996.