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TAIWAN

ADPAN Regrets Use of the Death Penalty and Appeals for the Lives of those under Sentence of Death ASA 38/002/2010

The Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN) regrets the decision made on 28 May by the Justices of the Taiwan Constitutional Court (of Judicial Yuan) to reject a petition made on behalf of 44 death row inmates.

This petition filed by the Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty (TAEDP) to the Constitutional Court aimed to highlight that the use of the death penalty was unconstitutional and there were flaws in the legal procedure regarding these cases. The petition was expected to provide a chance to open retrials for these cases or to save the 44 prisoners from execution.

Former Minister of Justice Wang Ching-feng who spoke out publicly to protect the lives of these death row prisoners was forced to resign in March following a statement she had made on their behalf.

Shortly afterwards in April, four of the 44 death row inmates were executed in one day. These executions have put an end to an unofficial moratorium in which Taiwan had taken a recognized lead in the region with no executions since 2005.

The 40 remaining death row inmates now face an increasingly uncertain future and may face imminent execution. ADPAN considers any executions in Taiwan or elsewhere to be cruel, inhuman and degrading and a violation of the right to life and out of step with the general global trend towards abolition.

ADPAN appeals to the Taiwan Government to stand out, lead and join the global majority rather than aligning itself with other executing countries in the region such as Bangladesh, China, North Korea and Vietnam - all have executed prisoners since the beginning of 2010.

The Taiwan Government is asked to revert to previous policy, prevent any further executions as it considers alternatives to the death penalty and introduce a moratorium on executions as implemented by Mongolia's President in January this year. This would be a welcome first step towards the abolition of the death penalty.

ADPAN is a cross-regional network made up of almost 50 members from 23 countries mainly from Asia and the Pacific dedicated to the abolition of the death penalty in the region. The Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty are members of ADPAN.

AI Index: ASA 38/002/2010

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