

EXTRA 05/02

Death Pen**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC) Lee (m), aged 55, South Korean citizen**

On 15 January, a South Korean citizen, identified only as Lee, was reportedly sentenced to death for alleged drug trafficking and manufacturing by a court in Qitaihe city, Heilongjiang province. Heilongjiang is in the northeast of China, bordering Russia and close to North Korea.

It is understood that Lee is due to appeal against his sentence. However successful appeals against the death penalty are rare and executions can take place within hours after the appeal has been rejected and the death sentence confirmed.

Lee was arrested in March 2001 and charged in November 2001 with producing methamphetamine, also known as "ice". At the end of his trial, which began on 5 January, Lee was convicted of manufacturing over 8kg of purified methamphetamine, and more than 700kg of semi-purified drugs. Another South Korean citizen, known as Kim, 46, was tried with him and reportedly sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for his involvement in the case.

Heilongjiang province executed another South Korean citizen convicted of drug trafficking in September 2001. The man, known as Shin, 41, became the first South Korean to be executed in China. Although South Korea retains the death penalty, it has not carried out any executions since 1998.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

China maintains the death penalty for a large number of offences, including non-violent crimes and economic crimes. A large proportion of sentences and executions are imposed for drug-related crimes. Each year China executes hundreds of people for drug offences on or around 26 June, which the United Nations has designated International Anti-Drugs day. Execution is by shooting or lethal injection. The death penalty is used extensively, arbitrarily and frequently as a result of political interference. It is particularly used during periodic "Strike Hard" anti-crime campaigns, when defendants may be sentenced to death for crimes which at other times may be punished by imprisonment.

The current "Strike Hard" anti-crime campaign initially targeted violent organized crime, but has been expanded to include a wide range of other crimes. Amnesty International is concerned that this campaign, which stresses "quick arrest, quick trial and quick results", may influence the proceedings and outcome of criminal trials. Amnesty International has recorded at least 2,960 death sentences and 1,781 executions in China in the three months from April to June 2001. These figures, taken from a limited number of sources, show that more people were executed in China between April and June than in the rest of the world for the last three years.

Despite the massive use of the death penalty for drug-related offences reports still indicate that China's drug problem is continuing to grow.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Chinese, English or your own language:**

- urging the authorities to commute the death sentence passed on the South Korean citizen Lee in the city of Qitaihe, Heilongjiang province;
- expressing deep concern at the arbitrary and massive use of the death penalty in China and its increased use for economic and non-violent crimes, and calling

on the government to immediately commute any death sentences handed down as part of the "Strike Hard" anti-crime crackdown;

- acknowledging the right of governments to bring perpetrators of crime to justice, but 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;
- noting that the death penalty has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect on crime and is brutalizing to all involved in its application.

**APPEALS TO:**

Premier of the People's Republic of China

ZHU Rongji Zongli

Guowuyuan

9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie

Beijingshi 100032

People's Republic of China

**Telex: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN**

**Telegram: Premier Zhu Rongji, Beijing, China**

**Faxes: + 8610 6 520 6722 (c/o Ministry of Justice)**

**+ 8610 6 529 2345 (c/o Ministry of Communications)**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

President of the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China

XIAO Yang Yuanzhang

Zuigao Renmin Fayuan

27 Dongjiao Min Xiang

Beijingshi 100726

People's Republic of China

**Telegram: President, Supreme People's Court, Beijing, China**

**Fax: +86106 512 5012**

**Salutation: Dear President**

Acting Governor of the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Government

SONG Fatang Daishengzhang

Heilongjiangsheng Renmin Zhengfu

202 Zhongshanlu

Haerbinshi 150001

Heilongjiangsheng

People's Republic of China

**Telegram: Acting Governor of the Provincial People's Government, Haerbin, Heilongjiang Province, China**

**Salutation: Dear Governor**

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**E-Mail: english\_mail@xinhuanet.com**

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

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 16 February 2002.