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Death Penalty

7 March 1991

PEOPLE`S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: Wang Xiguo

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Wang Xiguo, an unemployed construction worker from Wuxue town in Hubei Province, was recently sentenced to death for armed robbery, according to reports reaching Amnesty International. The date of sentencing by the local Intermediate People`s Court is not known, but Wang is said to be presently appealing against the judgment.

Wang is aged 35, and married with a six-year-old son. A business enterprise he started with a friend had apparently recently run into trouble.

Wang was charged by the prosecution with the theft of some 20,000 yuan from an unspecified company - no more details of the crime are available.

In recent years the death penalty has been increasingly used to combat economic crime and official corruption. One sentencing guideline for the use of the death penalty in such cases (issued by the central authorities at an unspecified date) states that "individuals who steal private or public property worth more than 30,000 yuan (about US\$ 7000) shall be sentenced to death according to the law". In practice, judicial authorities exercise a wide range of discretion in sentencing offenders to death for economic and other crimes.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- urging that Wang Xiguo`s death sentence be commuted;
- stating your unconditional opposition to the death penalty as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**APPEALS TO:****Party Secretary GUAN Guangfu:**

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**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 April 1991.



