

AI Index: PRE 01/112/2011
04 March 2011

Taiwan: Executions of five men condemned

Amnesty International has condemned the execution of five men in Taiwan on 4 March 2011.

The five men – Wang Chih-huang, Wang Kuo-hua, Chuang Tien-chu, Guang Chung-yen and Chung Teh-shu – were all executed by shooting. They had been separately sentenced to death for crimes committed between 1988 and 2005.

“The Taiwanese authorities have repeatedly stated their intention to abolish the death penalty,” said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International’s Asia Pacific Director. “But they have – yet again – acted contrary to their own commitments and against the global trend towards abolition of the death penalty.”

The executions come four weeks after President Ma Ying-jeou formally apologised for the execution of an innocent man in 1997.

“Only last month, President Ma had to apologize for the execution of an innocent man. Following that so closely with today’s executions, however, shows a blatant disregard for the fallibility and irreversibility of the death penalty,” said Sam Zarifi.

The Taiwanese authorities resumed executions for the first time since 2005 last year, when four people were executed on 30 April 2010.

Taiwan provides no procedure that would allow people under sentence of death to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence – a right recognized by International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Taiwan has legally committed to implement.

More than 70 people remain on death row in Taiwan. Family members are not informed about scheduled executions in advance. They learn about the executions afterwards when they are invited to collect the body from the mortuary.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to carry out the execution.