

UA 106/01

Death penalty

27 April 2001

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC)

Li Guang

Mu Jiangqiao

Zhang Yusong

Another man, name not known

Four people were sentenced to death on 25 April in Yunnan province, as part of the ongoing national "Strike Hard" anti-crime campaign.

All four were sentenced to death by an Intermediate People's Court in Lijiang region, Yunnan Province. Li Guang and Mu Jiangqiao were reportedly accused of robbing a US diplomat at knife point on 13 August 2000, in a park in Lijiang. The robbers reportedly stole 400 Yuan (approximately US\$48), a camera and a watch. Li Guang and Mu Jiangqiao were accused of being part of a gang of 12 who reportedly committed 10 armed robberies in Lijiang in a three-month period in 2000.

Zhang Yusong and other defendants were accused of robbing two tourists at knife point on 19 July 2000 in Lijiang, and stealing 400 Yuan and \$30 in cash. Nine other defendants were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment.

The unnamed defendant was also accused of robbery in a separate case.

The president of the court, Zhao Qin, was reported as stating that similar crimes and criminals will be punished without leniency in order to maintain the peace and harmony of the ancient town of Lijiang, which is a major tourist destination. It is possible that the four men were sentenced harshly because of the current crackdown on crime and because their alleged victims were foreign tourists.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The death penalty is used extensively, arbitrarily, and frequently as a result of political interference. There are often mass executions during major events or on public holidays, such as 1 January and the Chinese New Year. Execution is by shooting or lethal injection.

A national "Strike Hard" campaign to crack down on crime was announced in Beijing on 11 April, aimed at "cracking down on evil forces and wiping out hooligans" and focussing on violent crimes as well as crimes involving multiple theft or robbery. On that day alone, 89 people were executed. There have been additional reports that over 300 people have since been sentenced to death.

It has also been reported that "Special Procedures" have been introduced to deal quickly and effectively with criminals, which could result in arrests based on minimal evidence and summary trials and executions. Amnesty International is concerned that this renewed crackdown may influence the proceedings and outcome of criminal trials during the campaign. Previous anti-crime crackdowns have resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of people sentenced to death and a large number of suspected miscarriages of justice.

Only a fraction of death sentences and executions carried out in the country are publicly reported. From 1990 to the end of 1999, Amnesty

International recorded at least 27,599 death sentences and 18,194 executions. Even based on this limited record China executes many more people than the rest of the world put together.

This dramatic increase in executions comes as the Chinese government managed to block debate of its human rights record at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on 18 April, by using a procedural motion. On 25 April, the UN Commission on Human Rights adopted an EU-sponsored resolution calling upon "all states that still maintain the death penalty to establish a moratorium with a view to completely abolishing the death penalty."

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

- urging the authorities to commute the death sentences of Li Guang, Mu Jiangqiao, Zhang Yusong and the unnamed man, who were convicted by an Intermediate People's Court in Lijiang region, Yunnan Province, on 25 April;
- expressing grave concern that a national "Strike Hard" campaign has been announced, which has already resulted in the execution of at least 400 people;
- expressing concern that this campaign may result in summary trials and a potential rise in the number of miscarriages of justice in China;
- urging the authorities to reduce their use of the death penalty, in accordance with international trends and United Nations resolutions;
- 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.

**APPEALS TO:**

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**Salutation: Your Excellency**

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

**XIAO Yang** Yuanzhang

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

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Governor of the Yunnan Provincial People's Government

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**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 June 2001.