

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

## News Flash

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### **People's Republic of China: China begins 2003 with seven executions**

Amnesty International today strongly condemned the execution of seven people after a public sentencing rally in the southern city of Sanya - a popular tourist destination on Hainan island.

"The high number of executions and the way in which the death penalty is being applied in China show an appalling lack of respect for human life," Amnesty International said.

China puts more people to death at this time of year in order to "deter" crime in the run up to the Chinese New Year, which falls in early February this year. There is no evidence that the death penalty deters crime.

"We appeal to the Chinese Government to immediately stop executions and review the extensive use of the death penalty in China," the international human rights organization added saying that China continues to go against the world trend towards abolition of the death penalty.

Amnesty International also expressed its concerns about the way in which the death penalty is applied in China, the speed and fairness of trials and the wide range of offences punishable by the death penalty.

The organization opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception as a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Among those executed last Thursday was Ruan Xuesheng, 27, convicted of beating a fellow prisoner to death in November 2001. According to the reports, in addition to those sentenced to death, nine other defendants were sentenced to between four and 13 years in prison.

Amnesty International recorded more than 4,000 death sentences and nearly 2,500 executions in China in 2001.

For more information please visit our web site: [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) and read our previous press releases:  
ASA/17/054/2002  
ASA/17/047/2002  
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