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UA 27/92 Death Penalty
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC)

Li Wenhua
Liu Shulan (f)
Hang (Huang?) Xuncai

The three above-named prisoners were sentenced to death by a court in Beijing on 23 January 1991, for alleged economic offences, including embezzlement of over 400,000 yuan (US\$ 74,000) each. State television showed the three prisoners bowing before the courts as their sentences were read out, according to the Reuters news agency. The television report was quoted as saying that the three prisoners have ten days to lodge an appeal before the Beijing Higher People's Court.

Li Wenhua was described by Reuters as a manager at a municipal construction company, Liu Shulan as an executive at a technology trade corporation and Hang (or Huang) Xuncai as a hospital purchasing officer. The details of the accusations against them were not reported.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A growing number of prisoners in China have been sentenced to death in recent months for "economic crimes" not involving the use of violence. The crackdown against economic crimes appears to be part of a continuing campaign against crime, which was launched in 1990 and stepped up in 1991. On the basis of published information, Amnesty International has recorded over 1,600 death sentences in China in 1991, a far higher number than in any other year since 1983, but Amnesty International fears that the actual number of death sentences and executions may have been several times higher.

The current campaign against economic crimes is directed by the Political-Legal Department of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Justice minister Cai Cheng, at a conference of regional justice department heads held in late December 1991, said that "justice and executive" organs should continue in 1992 to "thoroughly understand and implement the Party's basic line".

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases, as the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment. The organization is also concerned that Li Wenhua, Liu Shulan and Hang (Huang?) Xuncai may have been sentenced to death after trials which fell far short of international standards for fair trials. Amnesty International is calling on the government of the PRC to commute all death sentences.

Like all prisoners accused of economic crimes, they have ten days to appeal against their sentences.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/faxes/airmail letters:

- expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment;
- urging that the death sentences passed against Li Wenhua, Liu Shulan and Hang (Huang) Xuncaï be commuted.

APPEALS TO:

Mayor of Beijing Municipality:

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Beijingshi Renmin Zhengfu
2 Zhengyilu
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People's Republic of China
Faxes: + 86 1 512 1158
Telexes: 210217 FAOGB CN or 22476 BJVGT CN
(Please forward to CHEN Xitong Shizhang)
Salutation: Dear Mayor

page 2 of UA 27/92

Chief Procurator of Beijing Municipality:

HE Fangba Jianchazhang
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Salutation: Dear Procurator

Premier of the People's Republic of China:

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Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Justice:

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Telexes: 22320 RMRB CN (Please forward to TAN Wenrui
Zong Bianji)

Salutation: Dear Sir

Secretary CCP Central Political-Legal Commission:

Qiao Shi Shuji

Zhonggong Zhongyang Zhengfa Weiyuanhui

Beijingshi

People's Republic of China

- and to diplomatic representatives of China in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 February 1992.