

PUBLIC

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UA 264/04 Fear of imminent execution

CHINA 50 unnamed people

More than 50 people are reported to have been sentenced to death for “separatist and terrorist” activities during the first eight months of this year in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), northwest China. They might be executed at any time.

According to a report from the Reuters news agency on 13 September, the Secretary of the Regional Communist Party Committee, Wang Lequan, told visiting journalists that none of those sentenced had yet been executed. He claimed that they had been detained in the context of a security crackdown on 22 groups involved in “separatist and terrorist” activities. He added: “Due to the fact that the activities of international terrorist forces are rampant, we believe our fight against the crime of violent terrorists will continue for a long time to come. Our efforts will exist as long as there are terrorist crimes.”

No further information has been made public about the circumstances of their trials or the evidence used to convict them. Their conditions of detention before their trials are unknown and it remains unclear whether they had access to legal representation.

In July and August this year, it was reported that four Uighurs, Kuerban Tudaji, Idris Kadir, Aihe Maititashi and Luoheman Maimaiti had been executed in three separate cases, all for “separatist” or “terrorist” activities. Amnesty International is deeply concerned that they are unlikely to have received a fair trial under international human rights standards.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

China’s ongoing political crackdown on the so-called “three evil forces” of “separatists, terrorists and religious extremists” is continuing to result in serious and widespread human rights violations directed against the mainly Muslim Uighur community in the XUAR – the only part of China where people are regularly sentenced to death for political crimes. The Chinese government’s use of the term “separatism” refers to a broad range of activities, many of which amount to no more than peaceful opposition or dissent, or the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of religion.

The human rights situation in the region has deteriorated further following the events of 11 September 2001, as China uses the international “war on terror” as a pretext to justify its policies of repression in the region. Over the last three years, tens of thousands of people are reported to have been detained for investigation in the region and hundreds, possibly thousands, have been charged or sentenced under the Criminal Law. Reports indicate that Uighurs detained on suspicion of “separatist” or “terrorist” offences are often detained without access to lawyers or their families and are at high risk of torture or ill-treatment in custody.

Ongoing ethnic tensions in the XUAR are fed by the failure of the Chinese authorities to address widespread violations of Uighurs’ civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. For example, the continuing influx of Han Chinese into the region has increased the level of high unemployment among Uighurs. There are increasing reports of Han Chinese property developers forcing Uighurs from their land. Tens of thousands of Uighurs books have been banned and burned and Uighur has been banned as a teaching language for most subjects in Xinjiang University. For further information, please see *Uighurs fleeing persecution as China wages its “war on terror”*, AI Index: ASA 17/021/2004, July 2004.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Chinese, English or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to stay the execution and commute the sentences of the 50 or more people who are reported to have been sentenced to death in XUAR province since January 2004;
- urging the authorities to make public their names and whereabouts and issue immediate guarantees for their safety;
- calling on the authorities to review their trials and demanding that, if inadequacies are found, they are either retried in accordance with international fair trial standards or released;
- calling for an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty in China.

APPEALS TO:

Chairman of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region People's Government

Ismail Tiliwaldi

Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu

2 Zhongshanlu

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Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu

People's Republic of China

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Salutation: **Dear Chairman**

Premier of the People's Republic of China

Wen Jiabao

Guowuyuan

9 Xihuangchenggengbeijie

Beijingshi 100032

People's Republic of China

Fax: **+ 86 10 6596 3374**

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

COPIES TO:

Secretary of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Regional Party Committee

Wang Lequan

Zhonggong Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu

Weiyuanhui

Wulumuqishi

Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu

People's Republic of China

Salutation: **Dear Secretary**

and to diplomatic representatives of China accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 October 2004.