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CHINA: CHINESE OFFICIAL FACES IMMINENT EXECUTION AFTER UNFAIR TRIAL

The Chinese authorities should immediately stop the execution of Wang Jianye, a 42-year-old local government official charged with alleged economic offences, Amnesty International said today.

"This is yet another example of how the death penalty is increasingly being used as a tool to combat economic crime and corruption," the organization said. "All possible steps should be taken by the international community to ensure Wang Jianye does not die."

Wang Jianye, a former director of the Finance and Trade Division of the Shenzhen Municipal Planning Bureau in Guangdong province, southern China, is facing imminent execution. His case is currently being reviewed by the Supreme People's Court, the last court of appeal.

The death sentence was passed on Wang Jianye after a trial at the Shenzhen Intermediate Court which lasted less than 10 hours. His wife, who attended the hearing, said that her husband's lawyer had no opportunity during the trial to present arguments for Wang's defence. No witnesses were summoned to give evidence and defence lawyers had only 10 days to examine 10 volumes of accusations compiled by the prosecution during an 18-month investigation. Wang Jianye has been held incommunicado since the rejection of his first appeal on 31 July 1995.

In a letter to Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng, Amnesty International's Secretary-General, Pierre Sané, urged him to "look into Wang Jianye's case so as to ensure that the death sentence passed on him be commuted without delay and that his case be reviewed through new fair trial proceedings, in accordance with international standards."

Wang Jianye's wife, who has been allowed two supervised 30-minute meetings with her husband since his detention, is adamant that he has always denied the accusations against him and believes that he is being made a scapegoat in an anti-corruption campaign which was launched shortly before his detention.

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