

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 39/001/2001

EXTRA 23/01

Fea.

KINGDOM OF THAILAND at least 10 people (names unknown)

At least 10 people sentenced to death for drug trafficking offenses are feared to be facing execution by firing squad during April.

According to the Prime Minister, three people - two Chinese nationals and one Thai national - will be executed before the *Songkran* holiday (New Year Water Festival) which begins on 13 April. A minister in the Prime Minister's office is reported to have said that "...there are some 10 drug convicts at the moment who we will execute one by one."

In February it was reported that a total of 19 people had exhausted their appeals and were now awaiting execution.

The last execution in Thailand took place in January 2000, and concerned a Burmese national convicted of drug trafficking. In 1999 17 people were executed. There are now reportedly 212 people on death row who have not yet completed the appeals process, including 145 people convicted of drug offenses.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The authorities recently announced that they intend to speed up the execution of people condemned for drug offenses, to act as a deterrent against the increasing production and trafficking of illegal drugs. At present once a death sentence has been upheld by the Supreme Court, the prisoner has 60 days in which to lodge an appeal for clemency with the King. This final stage of the appeals process can take some time. It is not known what steps the authorities plan to take to shorten this process.

In April 2000 the United Nations Commission on Human Rights passed a resolution which among other things called on states that still maintain the death penalty to progressively restrict the number of capital offences and to establish a moratorium on executions.

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

- expressing concern that three people sentenced to death for drug offenses will be executed before 13 April and that another seven may be executed before the end of April;
- urging the authorities not to carry out these executions and to establish an immediate moratorium on all executions;
- recognizing the need to take measures against serious crime, but pointing out that the death penalty has not been shown to have a particular deterrent effect;
- expressing concern that these executions go against international standards and recommendations by the United Nations Commission for Human Rights on progressive limitation of the use of the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra
Office of the Prime Minister
Government House
Pitsanuloke Road, Dusit

Bangkok 10300
Thailand
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Bangkok, Thailand
Faxes:+ 66 2 280 1443
Salutation:Dear Prime Minister

Purachai Piemsomboon
Minister of Interior
Ministry of Interior
Thanon Atsadang
Bangkok 10200
Thailand
Telegrams:Interior Minister, Bangkok, Thailand
Faxes:+ 66 2 223 8851
Salutation:Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

The Editor
The Nation
44 Moo 10
Bangna-Trad Road, K.M. 4.5
Bangna
Phra Khanong
Bangkok 10260, Thailand
Faxes:+ 66 2 317 2071
E-mail:editor@nation.nationgroup.com

The Editor
Bangkok Post
136 Na Ranong Road
Off Sunthorn Kosa Road
Klong Toey
Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Faxes:+ 66 2 240 3666
E-mail:postbag@bangkokpost.net

and to diplomatic representatives of Thailand accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 May 2001.