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China: Wu Ying case shows death sentences for non-violent crimes must go

The decision to order a retrial in the case of a Chinese businesswoman facing execution highlights the urgent need for the authorities to halt death sentences for non-violent crimes as a first step towards abolition, Amnesty International said as it welcomed the news.

Wu Ying had been convicted of fraudulent fundraising and the case prompted an unprecedented debate in China as well as international attention.

The retrial was ordered by China's Supreme People's Court.

“Wu Ying's fate has roused heated debate on the death penalty in China - we welcome the decision to retry her case,” said Catherine Baber, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Deputy Director.

“The authorities must ensure that the retrial upholds international fair trial standards, and does not end in a death sentence.

“A legal system allowing the ultimate punishment for non-violent crimes has rightly been questioned by many Chinese – we urge the authorities to end capital punishment for economic crimes, in keeping with international law.

“The authorities must also allow an option for clemency in death penalty cases, as many Chinese legal scholars have called for in Wu Ying's case.

“China should immediately establish a moratorium on all executions as a first step toward abolition.”