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EXTRA 63/01 Death penalty / Fear of imminent execution 6 September 2001

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC) Jiang Qiuping (f)
Qiu Yongbiao
Peng Xiantao

The three people named above were sentenced to death for their alleged involvement in a bombing which injured four people and killed five in Dayao Township, Liuyang city, Hunan Province on 31 May. Another four defendants were also sentenced to unspecified terms of imprisonment, for their alleged role in the bombing, by Changsha City Intermediate People's Court on 30 August.

Prior to the bombing, Jiang Qiuping reportedly threatened to blow up the family home of her husband, Zhang Changqing, because they had been having martial difficulties. On 31 May, she is alleged to have illegally purchased 250 kilograms of military blasting explosives and told Peng Xiantao to place the explosives at the backdoor of her husband's brother house. She then allegedly set off the explosives.

The court sentenced Peng Xiantao, a local farmer, to death for placing the explosives at the house at Jiang Qiuping's request, for driving her away from the house after the explosion and for attempting to flee in order to avoid punishment. The court also sentenced Qui Yongbiao, head of the Lurongtang fireworks factory in Liuyong City, to death for selling Jiang Quiping the explosives, despite her not having completed the necessary paperwork. The exact charges against Peng Xiantao and Qui Yongbiao are not known and it is not clear if either of them had any knowledge of Jiang Qiuping's intention to blow up the house.

It is not known if the three defendants have appealed against their sentence, though successful appeals are rare.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

China maintains the death penalty for a large number of offences, including non-violent crimes and economic crimes such as tax and financial fraud. Execution is by shooting or lethal injection. The death penalty is used extensively, arbitrarily, and frequently as a result of political interference. It is particularly used during periodic AStrike Hard@ anti-crime campaigns, when defendants may be sentenced to death for crimes which at other times are punishable by imprisonment.

There is currently a "Strike Hard" anti-crime campaign, which initially targeted violent organized crime, but this has been expanded to include a wide range of other crimes. Amnesty International is concerned that this campaign, which stresses "quick arrest, quick trial and quick results", may influence the proceedings and outcome of criminal trials. Previous anti-crime crackdowns have resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of people sentenced to death and a large number of suspected miscarriages of justice.

Amnesty International has recorded at least 2,960 death sentences and 1,781 executions in China in the 3 months from April to June 2001. These figures, taken from a limited number of sources, show that more people were executed in China between April and June than in the rest of the world for the last three years.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals in English, Chinese or your own language:

- urging the Chinese authorities to commute the death sentences passed on Jiang Qiuping, Qiu Yongbiao and Peng Xiantao in Hunan Province;
- expressing deep concern at the arbitrary and massive use of the death penalty in China and its increased use for economic and non-violent crimes, and calling on the government to immediately commute any death sentences handed down as part of the AStrike Hard@ anti-crime crackdown;
- acknowledging the right of governments to bring perpetrators of crime to justice, but expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment and as a violation of the right to life, as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- noting that the death penalty has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect on crime and is brutalizing to all involved in its application.

APPEALS TO:

Premier of the People's Republic of China

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People's Republic of China

Telex: 210070 FMPRC CN or 22478 MFERT CN
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Salutation: Your Excellency

President of the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China

XIAO Yang Yuanzhang Zuigao Renmin Fayuan 27 Dongjiao Min Xiang Beijingshi 100726

People's Republic of China

Telegram: President, Supreme People's Court, Beijing, China

Fax: c/0 Ministry of Communications - Fax: 00 86 10 6529 2345

Salutation: Dear President

Governor of the Hunan Provincial People's Government

CHU Bo - Daishengzhang Hunansheng Renmin Zhengfu 7 Wuyizhonglu Changshashi 410011

Hunansheng

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 98182 CSPG CN (Please forward the governor) Telegram: Governor, Changsha, Hunan Province, China

Salutation:Dear Governor

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and to diplomatic representatives of the People's Republic of China accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.