

EXTRA 95/95

Executions / Fear of further executions

11 August 1995

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA At least 10 unnamed people executed prior to Fourth
United Nations World Conference on Women

On 10 August 1995, the Chinese authorities announced that they had executed at least 10 people in Beijing to ensure "public order" during the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women due to convene in a few weeks in the Chinese capital. Amnesty International fears that these executions might be only the first of an execution campaign.

The *Beijing Daily* reported that more than 10 people convicted of murder, robbery and other crimes have already been executed. "To safeguard the capital's public order during the upcoming World Women's Conference, the Municipal First Intermediate Court quickly handled a batch of criminal cases", the official local newspaper said. After being approved by the Beijing High People's Court, the executions were carried out "in recent days". No more details on the judicial process were available.

According to the newspaper, a group of four workers and peasants who robbed six Beijing taxis between 6 April 1993 and 14 January 1994, killing six drivers and stealing their cars, were among those executed. An unemployed man, who already had a criminal record, was executed after he led a gang of 10 people in a revenge attack on a restaurant, killing the owner and injuring the manager. The rest were executed for crimes such as a string of robberies, illegal sale of guns and ammunition and "hooliganism".

Beijing is expecting an estimated 40,000 foreign visitors during the Fourth World Conference on Women. The conference - including a non-governmental organization forum - is to last from 30 August to 15 September. The forthcoming arrival of such a number of international delegates, for the first conference of this type ever in China, has led the Chinese authorities to strengthen security measures in the capital.

There is a pattern of "anti-crime campaigns" including executions prior to big festivals or major events in China. Executions are announced by the press, openly aiming to deter the population from taking part in any kind of "public disorder" during festivals or crowded occasions. During those campaigns, pressure is put on local authorities to quickly increase the number of "solved cases", and may result in a number of death penalties carried out with even fewer legal guarantees than usual.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty is used extensively in China. In 1994, Amnesty International recorded 2,496 death sentences and 1,791 executions. These figures are the highest ever recorded by Amnesty International, although it believes these figures to be well below the actual number of death sentences and executions carried out. The increased use of the death penalty in China since the late 1980s occurs in the context of continuing "anti-crime campaigns".

Amnesty International is concerned that death sentences in China are handed out following trials which fall far short of international standards for fairness. Defendants do not always have access to lawyers. In death penalty cases, lawyers, when available, usually have not more than one or two days

to prepare a defence. Death sentences are often decided in advance of the trial by "adjudication committees" whose decision is seldom challenged by the courts. Chinese legal experts have in recent years criticized the practice of pre-trial verdicts, but this is still reported to be widespread.

Amnesty International is also concerned that the use of the death penalty in China appears to be discriminatory; it tends to apply disproportionately to people of low social standing who have neither the social nor the political status which enables others to defend themselves against the accusations. Furthermore, cases have been reported in which death sentences were imposed on the basis of confessions extracted through coercion or torture.

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

- 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;
- expressing concern that at least 10 people have already been executed during an execution campaign prior to the United Nation World Conference on Women, and urge the Chinese authorities to put an end to this campaign;

APPEALS TO

Mayor of Beijing
LI Qiyang shizhang
Beijingshi Renmin Zhengfu
2 Zhengyilu
Dongchengqu
Beijingshi 100744
People's Republic of China

Telegrams: Mayor Li Qiyang, Beijing, China

Salutation: Dear Mayor

President of Beijing Municipal High People's Court
SHENG Liangang Yuanzhang
Beijingshi Gaoji Renmin Fayuan
215 Xiheyuan
Chingwenqu
Beijingshi 100051
People's Republic of China

Telegrams: President Sheng Liangang, Municipal High People's Court, Beijing, China

Salutation: Dear President

Vice-Minister of Public Security
Member of the Organizing Committee for the Fourth World Conference on Women
TIAN Qiyu fubuzhang
Gong'anbu
14 Dongchang'anlu
Beijingshi 100741
Peoples Republic of China

Telegrams: Vice-Minister Tian Qiyu, Ministry of Public Security, Beijing, China

Salutation: Dear Vice-Minister

Sections are also asked to bring this information to the attention of their government's delegation to the World Conference on Women in Beijing as well of non-government organizations in their countries preparing to attend.

COPIES TO:

Beijing Daily
Beijing Ribao
34 Xibiaobei Hutong
Dongdan
Beijing
People's Republic of China

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

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 September 1995.