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Taiwan – ADPAN welcomes “not guilty” verdict in “Hsichih Trio” case

ADPAN, the Asia-Pacific network which campaigns for the abolition of the death penalty welcomes the important decision to acquit the “Hsichih Trio”. The Taiwan High Court found Su Chien-ho, Liu Bing-lang and Chuang Lin-hsun not guilty on 12 November.

In considering the defendants’ case, the Taiwan High Court adopted the opinions of a written report by forensic expert, Henry Lee, who analyzed evidence from the crime scene. Dr Lee questioned the physical evidence which was allegedly insufficient to rule the three defendants guilty.

The “Hsichih Trio” were first sentenced to death in 1992 for the murder of a couple in March 1991. Since 1992, the defendants have alleged that police tortured them to extract confessions. These allegations have never been satisfactorily investigated despite Taiwan’s Criminal Procedure Law prohibiting evidence extracted through torture.

The “Hsichih Trio” case has been one of Taiwan’s most disputed and lengthy court cases spanning almost 20 years.

During this time, serious concerns around the possible miscarriages of justice, forced confessions and the impact on the health of the defendants have resulted in much debate both within and outside Taiwan. ADPAN hopes that the Supreme Court will decide to uphold the “not guilty” verdict.

ADPAN welcomes the recent decision of the High Court. In recognizing some of the significant steps taken by Taiwan, ADPAN is appealing to the Taiwan authorities to take a stand and follow the regional and worldwide trend towards abolition of the death penalty.

Background: ADPAN

ADPAN is an independent, cross-regional network of 50 members from 23 countries primarily from Asia and the Pacific. Its members include lawyers, NGO’s and activists who campaign for the abolition of the death penalty across the region. It is not linked to any political party or religion and is independent of all governments.

For more information please contact:

- Lin Hsiny-Yi, Executive Director, Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty ,
(TAEDP)

+886-(0)930-019345

+886 (0)2 25218870 / FAX: +886 (0)2 25319373

BLOG: www.taedp.org.tw / E-MAIL: taedp.tw@gmail.com

- Louise Vischer, ADPAN Coordinator, louise.vischer@amnesty.org

+44 (0)207 413 5656

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