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China: Day of death

The execution of at least 89 convicted criminals yesterday in China, shows an appalling lack of respect for human life and will do little to curb China's rising crime rate, Amnesty International said today.

"Like the other 'strike-hard' campaigns before it, this latest crackdown is unlikely to solve the crime problem. The Chinese government only has to look to the USA to see that executing people has no effect on the level of crime," the organization said.

The official Chinese news agency has reported a 50% increase in crime since 1999, which is evidence that extensive use of the death penalty is not working.

"Of great concern is that this blitz on human life increases the chances of miscarriages of justice. The rush to rid society of 'hardened criminals' could result in the execution of innocent people."

Amnesty International is appealing to the Chinese government to stop all executions and review the use of the death penalty with a view to abolishing it.

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