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**CHINA: THE DEATH OF DENG XIAOPING AND THE FUTURE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**HONG KONG --** The transition from Deng Xiaoping will be a testing time for the future course of human rights in China, Amnesty International said today. The organization urged the Chinese leadership to maintain the momentum of law reform.

“The Deng era has changed the face of China, but human rights improvements have lagged far behind economic reform,” said Rory Mungoven, Director of Amnesty International’s Asia-Pacific Program. “Deng will be remembered for beginning the overhaul of China’s economic system and consequent legal reform. But his legacy also includes a well-oiled machinery for repression, where the law is used as a weapon against dissent.”

Uncertainty in the lead-up to Deng’s death reflects the weakness of the rule of law in China and its legal institutions. In the past year, fear for stability in the transition from Deng has seen heightened repression against organized dissent.

“Nowhere is this uncertainty more acute than here in Hong Kong,” Mr Mungoven said. “It is vitally important that the autonomy and safeguards for human rights which were built into Hong Kong’s transition plan under Deng’s oversight remain in place.”

“One country, two systems was Deng’s vision. This model should be made to work as an enduring legacy to him.”

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