

EXTRA 47/02

Death Pen

PEOPLE'S Chen Chunyan (m), aged 18  
REPUBLIC Mo Keliang (m), aged 34  
OF CHINA Liu Hanji (m)  
(PRC) Deng Weiming (m), aged 33  
Wang Jiakuan (m)  
At least eight others, names unknown

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Amnesty International fears that those named above and at least eight others, are at risk of imminent execution. This follows the execution of at least 50 people this week, for drug related crimes to mark the United Nations designated International Anti-Drug Day on 26 June.

Chen Chunyan, an 18 year-old teenager from Quanzhou city, Fujian province, was reportedly sentenced to death this week for allegedly trying to sell 1,000 amphetamine pills worth 150,000 yuan (US \$18,000) to undercover police officers.

Hong Kong resident, Mo Keliang, and Liu Hanji, from Shenzhen, which borders Hong Kong, were sentenced to death by the Shenzhen Intermediate People's Court on 24 June for reportedly smuggling nearly 500 kg of drugs abroad. On the same day, Deng Weiming, from Hunan province, was sentenced to death by the Shenzhen Intermediate People's Court, which also sentenced Wang Jiakuan, from Shenzhen, to death with a two-year suspension for allegedly smuggling drugs.

On 25 June, 14 convicted drug dealers were reportedly sentenced to death following a public sentencing rally, held in the Shuangliu county sport grounds in Chengdu, Sichuan province, in the south west of China. Nine of them were executed immediately afterwards and the remaining five were sentenced to death with a two-year suspension of execution.

Over the last few days, two people have reportedly also been sentenced to death in the northern province of Heilongjiang and another "group" of people reportedly received the death penalty in Tianjin Municipality and in Henan province.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

China maintains the death penalty for a large number of offences, including non-violent crimes and economic crimes. A large proportion of sentences and executions are imposed for drug-related crimes. Execution is by shooting or lethal injection. Each year China executes scores of people for drug offences on or around 26 June, which the United Nations has designated International Anti-Drugs day. Amnesty International has also noted an increase in executions and death sentences during major events or before public holidays, such as the Chinese New Year.

In China the death penalty is used extensively, arbitrarily and frequently as a result of political interference, in particular during a "Strike Hard" anti-crime campaign, when defendants may be sentenced to death for crimes which at other times are punished by imprisonment. China is currently in the middle of a national anti-crime crackdown which has seen a dramatic rise in the number of people executed. Such crackdowns put great pressure on police and judicial authorities to investigate and sentence people for crimes as quickly as possible, meaning that the potential for miscarriages of justice and the execution of innocent people is increased.

In particular, the recent wave of executions takes place following the launch in February 2002 of a nationwide anti-drug crackdown. This was launched by the National Narcotics Control Commission and is scheduled to continue until the end of July 2002. There is little public evidence that the death penalty is effective in combatting the trafficking of illegal drugs.

Amnesty International recorded at least 4,015 death sentences and 2,468 executions in China during 2001, with a peak of 2,960 death sentences and 1,781 executions between April and June 2001, although the true figures are believed to be much higher. These figures, taken from a limited number of sources, show that China executed more people in these three months than the rest of the world did in the last three years.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Chinese, English or your own language:**

- urging the Chinese authorities to commute the death sentences passed on Chen Chunyan, Mo Keliang, Liu Hanji, Deng Weiming and Wang Jiakuan and at least eight others;
- calling for the arbitrary and massive use of the death penalty in China to be stopped;
- urging the Chinese government to exclude non-violent crimes from the scope of the death penalty, as recommended by the United Nations Special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions;
- 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.

**APPEALS TO: (Faxes in China are unreliable and may not work after office hours GMT +8)**

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and to diplomatic representatives of 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 7 August 2002