

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 76/95 (ASA 38/02/95, 23 March 1995) and follow-ups ASA 38/03/95, 20 April, and ASA 38/04/95,) - Death penalty / legal concern/fear of imminent execution

TAIWAN (REPUBLIC OF CHINA) Su Chien-ho, Liu Ping-lang, Chuang Lin-hsiung

On 29 May the executions of Su Chien-ho, Liu Ping-lang and Chuang Lin-hsiung were reported to have been postponed on the orders of Taiwan's Minister of Justice. This followed mass appeals from lawyers, parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations in Taiwan, and from Amnesty International's Urgent Action Network participants throughout the world.

The Minister of Justice is reported to have ordered a review of the three cases, expressing doubts about "certain points regarding the court's handling of their cases". Taiwan's Prosecutor General had previously made two unsuccessful appeals to the Supreme Court on behalf of the three men, on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence to convict them.

Following this decision, the three prisoners told journalists that their confessions were made after they had been tortured during police interrogation. Liu Ping-lang is reported to have said, "We were hung upside down during police interrogation and then forced to drink water, urine and pepper juice". They claim to be innocent of the charges against them.

Amnesty International is concerned that the authorities should conduct a thorough review of these three convictions. It should include an investigation of the arrests and interrogation of the three prisoners, including reports that they were tortured and forced to make confessions. The results of this investigation should be made public and any official responsible for torture or ill-treatment of the prisoners should be brought to justice.

Amnesty International continues to urge the Taiwan authorities to commute these death sentences. It opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman treatment. The death penalty is in force in Taiwan for a range of offences. At least 15 prisoners were executed during 1994. President Lee Teng-hui has the constitutional power to commute death sentences but appears to do so rarely.

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

- urging President Lee Teng-hui to exercise his constitutional powers to commute the death sentences imposed on Su Chien-ho, Liu Ping-lang and Chuang Lin-hsiung;
- welcoming the Minister of Justice's decision to review the trials of these three prisoners and urging him to order a thorough and impartial investigation into reports that they were tortured during police interrogation and forced to make confessions;

- calling for the results of this investigation to be made public and that any official found responsible for torture or ill-treatment be brought to justice;
- pointing out that the death penalty is irreversible and may easily be inflicted on the innocent; expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of torture and inhuman punishment and seeking its abolition in law.

APPEALS TO:

1) President Lee Teng-hui

Office of the President
Chiehshou Hall
122 Chungking S. Road, Sec 1
Taipei, Taiwan
Republic of China

Telegrams: President Lee Teng-hui, Taipei, Taiwan

Faxes: + 886 2 311 9574 or 314 0746 (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Dear President Lee

2) Ma Ying-jeou, Minister of Justice

Ministry of Justice
130 Chungching South Road, Sec 1
Taipei, Taiwan
Republic of China

Telegrams: Minister Ma Ying-jeou, Taipei, Taiwan

Faxes: +886 2 381 1528 or 389 6759

Salutation: Dear Minister Ma

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO one or more of the following:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

2 Chiehshou Road, Sec 2
Taipei Taiwan
Republic of China
Faxes: +886 2 311 9574 or 314 4972

Taiwan Association for Human Rights

9F, No 3, Lane 25, Sec 3
Hsingsheng S Road
Taipei, Taiwan
Republic of China
Faxes: +886 2 363 6102

China News

10th Floor, 109-1, Tung Hsing Street
Taipei, Taiwan
Republic of China
Faxes: +886 2 768 6773

Supreme Court

6 Chang Sha St, Sec 1
Taipei, Taiwan
Republic of China
Faxes: +886 2 341 9054

and to diplomatic representatives of TAIWAN (REPUBLIC OF CHINA) accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International secretariat, or your section office if sending appeals after 19 July 1995.