

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 39/004/2001

18 April 2001

Further information on EXTRA 23/01 (ASA 39/001/2001, 2 April 2001) and follow-up (ASA 39/003/2001, 12 April 2001) - Fear of imminent execution

KINGDOM OF THAILAND At least five people (names unknown)

Executed: Lee Yuan Kwang

Chu Ching Kuay
Boonkerd Jitpranee
Vichien Seanmahayak
Ramalee Tayae

Five people were executed by firing squad on 18 April. Four of them, Hong Kong national Lee Yuan Kwang, Taiwan national Chu Ching Kuay, and Thai nationals Boonkerd Jitpranee and Vichien Seanmahayak, had been convicted of drug trafficking offences. The last person to be executed, Thai national Ramalee Tayae, had been convicted of murder.

The Director General of the Corrections Department has reportedly said that a number of drug traffickers will be executed after the *Songkran* holiday, which ended on 17 April. The executions will allegedly be carried out daily, immediately after the rejection of the prisoner's final appeal for a Royal Pardon.

Amnesty International fears that at least five people convicted of drug offences, who have already exhausted the appeals process, face imminent execution. An unknown number of others in the final stages of appeal are also believed to be at risk.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The authorities have stated that they intend to speed up the execution of people sentenced to death for drug offences, to act as a deterrent against the increasing production and trafficking of illegal drugs. The authorities are reportedly seeking to remove the right to appeal for a Royal Pardon from people convicted of drug offences, in contravention of international standards guaranteeing the rights of those facing the death penalty. At present, once a death sentence has been upheld by the Supreme Court, the prisoner has 60 days in which to lodge an appeal for clemency with the King. This final stage of the appeals process can take some months.

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

- expressing grave concern and sadness that five people were executed on 18 April;
- expressing concern that at least five more people sentenced to death for drug offences face imminent execution, and that others in the final appeals stage may also be at risk;
- urging the authorities not to carry out further executions, and to impose an immediate moratorium on all executions;
- acknowledging that serious crime is a problem in many countries, and that governments need to uphold the rule of law and punish offenders;
- pointing out that there is no evidence that the death penalty acts as a more effective deterrent than other punishments, and that it is brutalizing to all involved in its application;

- expressing concern that removal of the final right of appeal for Royal Pardon for convicted drug offenders would contravene international standards guaranteeing the rights of those facing the death penalty

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra
Office of the Prime Minister
Government House
Pitsanuloke Road, Dusit
Bangkok 10300
Thailand

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Bangkok, Thailand

Faxes:+ 66 2 280 1443

Salutation:Dear Prime Minister

Purachai Piemsomboon
Minister of Interior
Ministry of Interior
Thanon Atsadang
Bangkok 10200
Thailand

Telegrams:Interior Minister, Bangkok, Thailand

Faxes:+ 66 2 223 8851

Salutation:Dear Minister

Siva Sangmanee
Director of Correction Department
Nonthaburee Road 1
Nonthaburee
Bangkok 11000
Thailand

Faxes: + 66 2 967 3335

Salutation:Dear Director

COPIES TO:

The Editor
The Nation
44 Moo 10
Bangna-Trad Road, K.M. 4.5
Bangna
Phra Khanong
Bangkok 10260, Thailand

Faxes:+ 66 2 317 2071

E-mail:editor@nation.nationgroup.com

The Editor
Bangkok Post
136 Na Ranong Road
Off Sunthorn Kosa Road
Klong Toey
Bangkok 10110, Thailand

Faxes:+ 66 2 240 3666

E-mail:postbag@bangkokpost.net

and to diplomatic representatives of the Kingdom of Thailand accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 May 2001.