



May 16, 2007

His Excellency Ban Ki-Moon
Secretary General of the United Nations
United Nations Plaza
New York, New York
10017
United States

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

On the eve of the United Nations' International Day Against Drugs on June 26, we seek your leadership in calling upon China to halt executions of persons convicted of drug smuggling, trafficking, and production charges.

Each year, in the days leading up to June 26th, China executes dozens – and in some years, hundreds – of prisoners. Hundreds more have received death sentences, often in large public rallies attended by thousands chanting “kill, kill”. Based on figures compiled from media reports, China has executed at least 467 people over the past ten years to commemorate the International Day Against Drugs.

China executes more prisoners each year than the rest of the world combined, and a broad range of non-violent crimes – including drug trafficking – are punishable by death. Despite recent moves to require review of all death sentences by the Supreme People's Court, human rights advocates have documented a range of abuses by police and the judicial system that call into question the impact of reform. Penalties of capital punishment and life imprisonment for drug charges in China far exceed international norms and human rights standards.

We call upon your excellency to condemn China's use of executions and death sentences to commemorate International Day Against Drugs as severe human rights violations and to make a public call to halt this practice. Progress against the problem of drugs and related issues, including the HIV epidemic, must be founded upon a solid respect and enforcement of human rights for all.

Sincerely,

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