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Taiwan (Republic of China): The death penalty and use of lethal injection

In 1998 Amnesty International stated in two reports that an execution by lethal injection had been carried out in Taiwan in May 1997.¹ Since the publication of these reports Amnesty International has learned that there have been no executions by lethal injection in Taiwan.

Although no executions by lethal injection have been carried out, Amnesty International remains concerned that this method of execution is legal and may be used at any time. Amnesty International is opposed to the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. It believes that the introduction of lethal injection as a method of execution risks involving medical skills and personnel in unethical activities. There is no humane way to kill people - all methods of execution are cruel.

In Taiwan at least 19 people have been executed by shooting this year alone and the death penalty remains mandatory for 65 different offences. The timing of executions appears to be arbitrary - they are carried out sporadically, on the orders of the Minister of Justice who signs an execution warrant. Families, lawyers and victims are not informed in advance and the Ministry of Justice does not generally publicise the fact that an execution has occurred.

Amnesty International reiterates its concern about the increased use of the death penalty in Taiwan in recent years and about the secrecy surrounding executions. The organization renews its appeal to the government to halt executions and take steps towards abolition of the death penalty in law.

¹See *Lethal Injection: the medical technology of execution*, AI Index: ACT 50/01/98, issued in January 1998 and *Amnesty International Report 1998*, p326.