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Statement on Imminent Execution of Japanese Citizens by China

China has informed Japan that it will execute four Japanese nationals for drug-smuggling.

The execution date of Mitsunobu Akano, 65, has been set for April 5th and that of the other three, Teruo Takeda, 67, Hironori Ukai, 48, and Katsuo Mori, 67, for April 8th.

Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada expressed concern over how the executions will impact public sentiment, but the government never expresses its demand specifically to stop the scheduled execution.

Even in the retentionist countries, the death penalty must be restricted to the most serious crimes within the meaning of article 6, paragraph 2 of ICCPR, and drug-related offences do not satisfy the threshold for capital punishment under the Covenant, as seen in UN Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations on Sri Lanka (1995), Kuwait (2000) and Thailand (2005).

We denounce not only China's brutal act of killings but also Japanese government's failure in taking an action to protect its own citizens on the grounds that Japan, which also retains the death penalty and deems the punishment as necessary, should not intervene in China's domestic issue.

Center for Prisoners' Rights Japan strongly opposes imposition of capital punishment to any crime by any government and strengthens its commitment to movement for universal abolition in solidarity with various individuals and organizations against the death penalty.

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