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The six men were executed by firing squad at four different prisons in Taiwan earlier this evening. All had been convicted of murder.

The executions were carried out amidst public outrage following the abhorrent murder of an eight year old girl in Taipei last week.

“ The decision to carry out the executions reeks of political calculations by a government attempting to gain points by quelling public anger. ”

William Nee, researcher at Amnesty International.

“The public outrage at the horrific murder of an innocent schoolgirl is totally understandable and the perpetrators of such heinous crimes must face justice, but the death penalty is never the answer,” said William Nee, researcher at Amnesty International.

“The decision to carry out the executions reeks of political calculations by a government attempting to gain points by quelling public anger. The government has today demonstrated a failure of political leadership.”

The six men executed by firing squad were: Cheng Chin-wen, Wang Hsiu-fang, and Tsao Tien-shou at a prison in Taipei; Wang Chun-chin at a prison in Tainan; Wang Yu-lung at a prison in Kaohsiung; and Huang Chu-wang in Taichung.

Executions in Taiwan are shrouded in secrecy, with the families and lawyers of those executed rarely informed in advance.

In 2014, Taiwan carried out five executions and imposed one new death sentence, all involving people convicted of murder.

Taiwan was one of only 22 countries to carry out executions in 2014, compared to 41 countries 20 years ago. A total of 140 states have now abolished the death penalty in law or practice.

“The executions fly in the face of the government’s stated long term goal to abolish the death penalty. The government must cease using executions as a political tool and should establish an official moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolition.”

There is no convincing evidence that the death penalty prevents crime more effectively than other punishments. A comprehensive study carried out by the United Nations on the relationship between the death penalty and homicide rates concluded that research has failed to provide scientific proof that executions have a greater deterrent effect than life imprisonment.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature or circumstances of the crime; guilt, innocence or other characteristics of the individual; or the method used by the state to carry out the execution. The death penalty violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

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