

## **Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Policy of Sentencing the Majority of Counterrevolutionaries Guilty of Capital Crimes to Death with a Two-Year Reprieve**

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To all Central Bureaus, and to be forwarded to Sub-bureaus, Provincial, Municipal, and Regional Party Committees, all Major Military Regions and, through them, to all Provincial Military Regions, all Corps, and the Volunteer Army Headquarters; also to be communicated to all departments directly under the Central Committee and the Military Commission, all Special Military Units, and all Party groups of the Central Government:

The Central Committee has decided that, among counterrevolutionaries purged from within the Communist Party, the People's Liberation Army, the People's Government system, the education sector, industry and commerce, religious organizations, democratic parties, and various mass organizations—aside from those whose crimes do not warrant death and should be sentenced to fixed-term or life imprisonment or subjected to control and surveillance—only those who have blood debts, those who have committed other heinous crimes that provoke widespread public outrage (such as raping numerous women or plundering large amounts of property), and those who have inflicted the most severe damage to national interests should be executed.

For all others, the policy shall be to sentence them to death with a two-year reprieve, during which they will be subjected to forced labor under strict supervision, with their conduct observed over time. This is a cautious policy that helps avoid mistakes. It is a policy that can garner sympathy from broader society, divide counterrevolutionary forces, and contribute to their complete eradication. Additionally, this policy preserves a significant labor force, which is beneficial for national construction. Therefore, this is a correct policy.

It is estimated that among the counterrevolutionaries identified within the Party, government, military, education, economic, and mass organizations, only a small fraction (approximately 10–20%) have committed blood crimes, incited extreme public resentment, or severely harmed national interests. In contrast, 80–90% of those sentenced to death may be granted a reprieve—thus sparing this majority from execution.

These individuals differ from bandit leaders, habitual criminals, and landlords in the countryside, as well as from urban gang leaders, major ruffians, and secret society heads. They also differ from certain spies who have inflicted the most severe damage to national interests. They lack direct blood debts or major crimes that have provoked mass hatred. While they have harmed national interests seriously, it is not to the most extreme degree. They are guilty of capital crimes, but the masses have not directly suffered from their actions.

If we were to execute these individuals, the masses might not understand the necessity, social figures might not sympathize, and it would result in both a significant loss of labor force and a missed opportunity to divide the enemy. Moreover, we risk making errors on this issue.

Therefore, the Central Committee has decided to sentence such individuals to death with a two-year reprieve, subjecting them to forced labor under supervision to observe their behavior. If some among them fail to reform and continue their wrongdoing, they may still be executed in the future, with the decision remaining in our hands.

Below is the report from the Northeast Military Region Security Department regarding the first batch of 204 counterrevolutionaries arrested within the military system. Please review the report and handle these cases according to the principles outlined above.

All counterrevolutionaries identified in Party, government, military, education, economic, and mass organizations across various regions should be dealt with under the same principles.

For the small minority (approximately 10–20%) who must be executed, approval must be obtained from the Large Administrative Region or Major Military Region to ensure caution. Cases involving important figures in the United Front must be reported to the Central Committee for approval.

Additionally, in rural areas, only those whose execution is absolutely necessary to quell public anger should be executed. Those whom the people do not demand to be executed should not be killed. In some cases, the policy of death sentences with reprieve should also be applied.

For those whom the people strongly demand to be executed, execution must be carried out to satisfy public sentiment and benefit production.

The Central Committee  
May 8, 1951

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