

Ex-Head Of China's Food And Drug Administration Executed For Taking Bribes



BEIJING, July 10 (Bernama) -- The Supreme People's Court executed former director of China's State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA) Zheng Xiaoyu on Tuesday morning, after finding him guilty of taking bribes amounting to US\$850,000 (6.49 million yuan) and dereliction of duty.

On May 29, the Beijing Municipal No.1 Intermediate People's Court sentenced Zheng, 63, to death, quoting a news report filed by Xinhua news agency on Tuesday.

Zheng appealed for leniency in a second hearing of his case on June 12, pleading that the penalty was "too severe" and asking the court to reconsider the sentence.

He also testified which implicated other officials in the case.

However, on June 22, the Higher People's Court of Beijing rejected Zheng's appeal and upheld the death sentence. "The evidence provided by Zheng was obtained by the prosecution team before his confession," said the court, which then asked for a review and the approval of the Supreme People's Court (SPC).

The SPC ratified the death sentence against Zheng saying that the judgement made by the first and second hearings was authentic, the evidence was complete and the death sentence was appropriate."

"Zheng's dereliction of duty has undermined the efficiency of China's drug monitoring and supervision, endangered public life and health and has had a very negative social impact," said SPC.

The bribes taken by Zheng, including cash and gifts, were received either directly or through his wife and son, according to the court.

The court said Zheng "sought benefits" for eight pharmaceutical companies by approving their drugs and medical devices during his tenure as China's chief drug and food official from June 1997 to December 2006.

Zheng violated reporting rules and decision-making processes when approving medicines between 2001 and 2003.

He failed to make careful arrangements for the supervision of medicine production, which is of critical importance to people's lives, said the court.

The consequences of Zheng's dereliction of duty have proved extremely serious.

Six types of medicine approved by the administration during that period were fake. Some pharmaceutical companies used false documents to apply for approvals, the court said.

Zheng is the country's fourth senior official of his rank to be sentenced to death in

recent years, following former vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Cheng Kejie and two former provincial deputy governors Hu Changqing and Wang Huaizhong. Cheng and Hu were sentenced in 2000 and Wang was sentenced in 2004.

Last week, one of Zheng's subordinates, Cao Wenzhuang, former head of the drug registration department of the SFDA, was given a suspended death sentence by the Beijing Municipal No.1 Intermediate People's Court.

Commenting on Zheng's case, SFDA spokeswoman Yan Jiangying said at a news conference on Tuesday that corrupt officials were the shame of the food and drug supervision system.

"We should seriously reflect and learn lessons from these cases. We should fully protect people's food and drug safety. The new drug registration regulation, which will come out soon, will ensure the transparency of the drug approval procedure," Yan said.

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