

China sentences another eight to death in Urumqi

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A court in China's restive Xinjiang yesterday sentenced three more people to death for their roles in July ethnic violence, Xinhua news agency reported, raising the total reported condemned to 17.

On Thursday, the court handed out death sentences to five others.

The Intermediate People's Court of Urumqi also sentenced one person to life in prison, while three defendants were given varying jail terms for the violence that left nearly 200 dead and over 1,600 injured, the agency said.

Last month nine people previously sentenced to death were executed for their roles in the violence, the worst strife in China in decades.

Violence erupted in the streets of Urumqi on July 5, when Uighurs — a Muslim minority that has long complained of Chinese repression — reportedly attacked members of China's Han ethnic majority.

In subsequent days, mobs of Han roamed the city's streets seeking revenge.

Xinhua identified those sentenced to death yesterday as Heyrinisa Sawut and Ruzikhari Niyaz — both apparently Uighurs judging from their names — and Li Longfei.

Sawut was convicted of beating one man to death and injuring three others by repeatedly bludgeoning them with a wooden club, Xinhua said, while Niyaz was convicted of killing a taxi driver.

Li Longfei was convicted over the beating deaths of at least two victims, whose names suggested they were Uighurs.

So far 41 people have been tried and sentenced in the unrest.

Of the five sentenced to death on Thursday, Memeteli Islam was accused of killing a police officer by smashing him in the back of the head with a brick.

Mamattursun Elmu and Memeteli Abburakm were accused of attacking a minibus and kicking a man and woman inside until they died. Mamattursun Elmu was also charged with setting fire to a grain distribution center, killing five people.

Helil Sadir was accused of killing a bystander with a beer bottle and kicks to the face, and Kushiman Kurban was found guilty of stabbing a bystander to death.

Rebiya Kadeer, leader of the Germany-based World Uyghur Congress, said in a statement

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e-mailed to journalists: “The Chinese government has brazenly ignored all standards of due process of law in a campaign to silence and intimidate the Uighur population through executions and mass detentions.”

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