

The New York Times

CLM Sinosphere
SE World; Asia Pacific
HD **Billionaire Leader of 'Mafia-Style' Gang Sentenced to Die**
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WC 613 words
PD 23 May 2014
SN NYT Blogs
SC NYTB
LA English
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A **Chinese** tycoon and his brother have been sentenced to death for murder and running a “mafia-style” gang that engaged in a two-decade crime spree, accumulating a business empire amounting to more than \$6 billion.

Liu Han, 48, and his younger brother, Liu Wei, were sentenced on Friday by a court in the central province of Hubei, with the punishment [announced](#) on **China** Central Television. The two were at the apex of a gang of 36 people charged with crimes including intentional injury and the murders of eight people. Three other gang members were also sentenced to death, with the rest handed sentences including life imprisonment and suspended death penalties, the provincial government reported on its news website.

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Mr. Liu's arrest in March of last year had international implications because he was in talks to [buy](#) an Australian mining [company](#), [Sundance Resources](#). The deal collapsed the following month. In 2009, his flagship [company](#), Sichuan Hanlong [Group](#), [bought a controlling stake](#) in another Australian mining [company](#), [Moly Mines](#). The Sichuan Hanlong [Group](#) was also punished, with a fine of almost \$50 million, for providing false information to banks to obtain loans and other infractions, the state news agency Xinhua reported on its microblog [site](#).

[#Chinese](#) court Fri sentenced former mining tycoon Liu Han to death, 1st trials of 36 mafia-like gang led by Liu. <http://t.co/CqNaHagyT2>

— [People's Daily, China](#) (@PDChina) 23 May 14

Prosecutors painted a picture of two brothers who would stop at nothing to build their wealth, which amounted to 40 billion renminbi, or \$6.4 billion, Xinhua reported in February, when the gang was charged. The brothers' business operations ranged from gambling to construction materials.

“Liu Han and Liu Wei were deeply evil,” the People's Intermediary Court in Xianning [said](#) in announcing the sentence. “Their means were extremely cruel, their impact on society was extremely bad.”

Liu Wei, a torchbearer for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, is accused of ordering the killings of three people in 2009 at an open-air tea house in his hometown of Guanghan, in the southwestern province of Sichuan, Xinhua reported in February. He went into hiding after the suspects arrested for the killings said he was responsible. Last March he was arrested, with Xinhua saying he helped his older brother evade capture.

In rounding up the gang members last year, the police said they confiscated three grenades, 20 guns, 677 bullets and more than 100 knives, Xinhua reported in February. The Liu brothers and their associates had fleets of cars including Rolls-Royces, Bentleys and Ferraris, Xinhua said.

While the charges and verdict were extraordinary in themselves, Liu Han's possible ties to the family of the former **Chinese** security chief, Zhou Yongkang, raised the profile of the trial. In February, the respected **Chinese** business magazine Caixin [reported](#) that Mr. Liu and Mr. Zhou's son, Zhou Bin, had a business relationship in Sichuan, where Zhou Yongkang served as the top official from 1999 to 2002.

Zhou Bin helped Mr. Liu overcome regulatory obstacles in acquiring a power **company**, and Mr. Liu had bought a tourism **property** from Mr. Zhou, the magazine reported. Several other Sichuan business executives and former officials tied to Zhou Yongkang's family are also facing prosecution.

Zhou Yongkang was detained amid a graft investigation in December, The New York Times [reported](#). Should he be charged and tried, he would be the highest-ranking **Chinese** leader to be prosecuted for corruption since the Communist Party came to power in 1949.

Kiki Zhao contributed research.

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IPD News

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AN Document NYTB000020140523ea5n000gp