

The National People's Congress of China



Criminal Law

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Published by Good Press, 2022

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EAN 4064066464295

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Chapter I The Aim, Basic Principles and Scope of Application of the Criminal Law](#)

[Chapter II Crimes](#)

[Section 1 Crimes and Criminal Responsibility](#)

[Section 2 Preparation for a Crime, Criminal Attempt and Discontinuation of a Crime](#)

[Section 3 Joint Crimes](#)

[Section 4 Crimes Committed by a Unit](#)

[Chapter III Punishments](#)

[Section 1 Types of Punishments](#)

[Section 2 Public Surveillance](#)

[Section 3 Criminal Detention](#)

[Section 4 Fixed-term Imprisonment and Life Imprisonment](#)

[Section 5 The Death Penalty](#)

[Section 6 Fines](#)

[Section 7 Deprivation of Political Rights](#)

[Section 8 Confiscation of Property](#)

[Chapter IV The Concrete Application of Punishments](#)

[Section 1 Sentencing](#)

[Section 2 Recidivists](#)

[Section 3 Voluntary Surrender and Meritorious Performance](#)

[Section 4 Combined Punishment for Several Crimes](#)

[Section 6 Commutation of Punishment](#)

[Section 7 Parole](#)

[Section 8 Limitation](#)

[Chapter V Other Provisions](#)

[Part Two Specific Provisions](#)

[Chapter I Crimes of Endangering National Security](#)

[Chapter II Crimes of Endangering Public Security](#)

[Chapter III Crimes of Disrupting the Order of the Socialist Market Economy](#)

[Section 1 Crimes of Producing and Marketing Fake or Substandard Commodities](#)

[Section 2 Crimes of Smuggling](#)

[Section 3 Crimes of Disrupting the Order of Administration of Companies and Enterprises](#)

[Section 4 Crimes of Disrupting the Order of Financial Administration](#)

[Section 5 Crimes of Financial Fraud](#)

[Section 6 Crimes of Jeopardizing Administration of Tax Collection](#)

[Section 7 Crimes of Infringing on Intellectual Property Rights](#)

[Section 8 Crimes of Disrupting Market Order](#)

[Chapter IV Crimes of Infringing upon Citizens' Right of the Person and Democratic Rights](#)

[Chapter V Crimes of Property Violation](#)

[Chapter VI Crimes of Obstructing the Administration of Public Order](#)

[Section 1 Crimes of Disturbing Public Order](#)

[Section 2 Crimes of Impairing Judicial Administration](#)

[Section 3 Crimes Against Control of National Border \(Frontier\)](#)

[Section 4 Crimes Against Control of Cultural Relics](#)

[Section 5 Crimes of Impairing Public Health](#)

[Section 6 Crimes of Impairing the Protection of Environment and Resources](#)

[Section 7 Crimes of Smuggling, Trafficking in, Transporting and Manufacturing Narcotic Drugs](#)

[Section 8 Crimes of Organizing, Forcing, Luring, Sheltering, or Procuring Other Persons to Engage in Prostitution](#)

[Section 9 Crimes of Producing, Selling or Disseminating Pornographic Materials](#)

[Chapter VII Crimes of Impairing the Interests of National Defence](#)

[Chapter VIII Crimes of Embezzlement and Bribery](#)

[Chapter IX Crimes of Dereliction of Duty](#)

[Chapter X Crimes of Servicemen's Transgression of Duties](#)

[Supplementary Provisions](#)

[Appendix I](#)

[Appendix II](#)

Chapter I The Aim, Basic Principles and Scope of Application of the Criminal Law

[Table of Contents](#)

Article 1 In order to punish crimes and protect the people, this Law is enacted on the basis of the Constitution and in the light of the concrete experiences and actual circumstances in China's fight against crimes.

Article 2 The aim of the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China is to use criminal punishments to fight against all criminal acts in order to safeguard security of the State, to defend the State power of the people's democratic dictatorship and the socialist system, to protect property owned by the State, and property collectively owned by the working people and property privately owned by citizens, to protect citizens' rights of the person and their democratic and other rights, to maintain public and economic order, and to ensure the smooth progress of socialist construction.

Article 3 For acts that are explicitly defined as criminal acts in law, the offenders shall be convicted and punished in accordance with law; otherwise, they shall not be convicted or punished.

Article 4 The law shall be equally applied to anyone who commits a crime. No one shall have the privilege of transcending the law.

Article 5 The degree of punishment shall be commensurate with the crime committed and the criminal responsibility to be borne by the offender.

Article 6 This Law shall be applicable to anyone who commits a crime within the territory and territorial waters and space of the People's republic of China, except as otherwise specifically provided by law.

This Law shall also be applicable to anyone who commits a crime on board a ship or aircraft of the People's Republic of China.

If a criminal act or its consequence takes place within the territory or territorial waters or space of the People's Republic of China, the crime shall be deemed to have been committed within the territory and territorial waters and space of the People's Republic of China.

Article 7 This Law shall be applicable to any citizen of the People's Republic of China who commits a crime prescribed in this Law outside the territory and territorial waters and space of the People's Republic of China; however, if the maximum punishment to be imposed is fixed-term imprisonment of not more than three years as stipulated in this Law, he may be exempted from the investigation for his criminal responsibility.

This Law shall be applicable to any State functionary or serviceman who commits a crime prescribed in this Law outside the territory and territorial waters and space of the People's Republic of China.

Article 8 This Law may be applicable to any foreigner who commits a crime outside the territory and territorial waters and space of the People's Republic of China against the State of the People's Republic of China or against any of its citizens, if for that crime this Law prescribes a minimum punishment of fixed-term imprisonment of not less than

three years; however, this does not apply to a crime that is not punishable according to the laws of the place where it is committed.

Article 9 This Law shall be applicable to crimes which are stipulated in international treaties concluded or acceded to by the People's Republic of China and over which the People's Republic of China exercises criminal jurisdiction within the scope of obligations, prescribed in these treaties, it agrees to perform.

Article 10 Any person who commits a crime outside the territory and territorial waters and space of the People's Republic of China, for which according to this Law he should bear criminal responsibility, may still be investigated for his criminal responsibility according to this Law, even if he has already been tried in a foreign country. However, if he has already received criminal punishment in the foreign country, he may be exempted from punishment or given a mitigated punishment.

Article 11 The criminal responsibility of foreigners who enjoy diplomatic privileges and immunities shall be solved through diplomatic channels.

Article 12 If an act committed after the founding of the People's Republic of China and before the entry into force of this Law was not deemed a crime under the laws at the time, those laws shall apply. If the act was deemed a crime under the laws in force at the time and is subject to prosecution under the provisions of Section 8, Chapter IV of the General Provisions of this Law, criminal responsibility shall be investigated in accordance with those laws. However, if according to this Law the act is not deemed a

crime or is subject to a lighter punishment, this Law shall apply.

Before the entry into force of this Law, any judgment that has been made and has become effective according to the laws at the time shall remain valid.

Chapter II Crimes

[Table of Contents](#)

SECTION 1 CRIMES AND CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

[Table of Contents](#)

Article 13 A crime refers to an act that endangers the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of the State, splits the State, subverts the State power of the people's democratic dictatorship and overthrows the socialist system, undermines public and economic order, violates State-owned property, property collectively owned by the working people, or property privately owned by citizens, infringes on the citizens' rights of the person, their democratic or other rights, and any other act that endangers society and is subject to punishment according to law. However, if the circumstances are obviously minor and the harm done is not serious, the act shall not be considered a crime.

Article 14 An intentional crime refers to an act committed by a person who clearly knows that his act will entail harmful consequences to society but who wishes or allows such consequences to occur, thus constituting a crime.

Criminal responsibility shall be borne for intentional crimes.

Article 15 A negligent crime refers to an act committed by a person who should have foreseen that his act would possibly entail harmful consequences to society but who fails to do so through his negligence or, having foreseen the

consequences, readily believes that they can be avoided, so that the consequences do occur.

Criminal responsibility shall be borne for negligent crimes only when the law so provides.

Article 16 An act is not a crime if it objectively results in harmful consequences due to irresistible or unforeseeable causes rather than intent or negligence.

Article 17 If a person who has reached the age of 16 commits a crime, he shall bear criminal responsibility.

If a person who has reached the age of 14 but not the age of 16 commits intentional homicide, intentionally hurts another person so as to cause serious injury or death of the person, or commits rape, robbery, drug-trafficking, arson, explosion or poisoning, he shall bear criminal responsibility.

If a person who has reached the age of 14 but not the age of 18 commits a crime, he shall be given a lighter or mitigated punishment.

If a person is not given criminal punishment because he has not reached the age of 16, the head of his family or his guardian shall be ordered to discipline him. When necessary, he may be taken in by the government for rehabilitation.

Article 18 If a mental patient causes harmful consequences at a time when he is unable to recognize or control his own conduct, upon verification and confirmation through legal procedure, he shall not bear criminal responsibility, but his family members or guardian shall be ordered to keep him under strict watch and control and arrange for his medical treatment. When necessary, the government may compel him to receive medical treatment.

Any person whose mental illness is of an intermittent nature shall bear criminal responsibility if he commits a crime when he is in a normal mental state.

If a mental patient who has not completely lost the ability of recognizing or controlling his own conduct commits a crime, he shall bear criminal responsibility; however, he may be given a lighter or mitigated punishment.

Any intoxicated person who commits a crime shall bear criminal responsibility.

Article 19 Any deaf-mute or blind person who commits a crime may be given a lighter or mitigated punishment or be exempted from punishment.

Article 20 An act that a person commits to stop an unlawful infringement in order to prevent the interests of the State and the public, or his own or other person's rights of the person, property or other rights from being infringed upon by the on-going infringement, thus harming the perpetrator, is justifiable defence, and he shall not bear criminal responsibility.

If a person's act of justifiable defence obviously exceeds the limits of necessity and causes serious damage, he shall bear criminal responsibility; however, he shall be given a mitigated punishment or be exempted from punishment.

If a person acts in defence against an on-going assault, murder, robbery, rape, kidnap or any other crime of violence that seriously endangers his personal safety, thus causing injury or death to the perpetrator of the unlawful act, it is not undue defence, and he shall not bear criminal responsibility.

Article 21 If a person is compelled to commit an act in an emergency to avert an immediate danger to the interests of the State or the public, or his own or another person's rights of the person, property or other rights, thus causing damage, he shall not bear criminal responsibility.

If the act committed by a person in an emergency to avert danger exceeds the limits of necessity and causes undue damage, he shall bear criminal responsibility; however, he shall be given a mitigated punishment or be exempted from punishment.

The provisions of the first paragraph of this Article with respect to averting danger to oneself shall not apply to a person who is charged with special responsibility in his post or profession.

SECTION 2 PREPARATION FOR A CRIME, CRIMINAL ATTEMPT AND DISCONTINUATION OF A CRIME

[Table of Contents](#)

Article 22 Preparation for a crime refers to the preparation of the instruments or the creation of the conditions for a crime.

An offender who prepares for a crime may, in comparison with one who completes the crime, be given a lighter or mitigated punishment or be exempted from punishment.

Article 23 A criminal attempt refers to a case where an offender has already started to commit a crime but is prevented from completing it for reasons independent of his will.

An offender who attempts to commit a crime may, in comparison with one who completes the crime, be given a lighter or mitigated punishment.

Article 24 Discontinuation of a crime refers to a case where, in the course of committing a crime, the offender voluntarily discontinues the crime or voluntarily and effectively prevents the consequences of the crime from occurring.

An offender who discontinues a crime shall, if no damage is caused, be exempted from punishment or, if any damage is caused, be given a mitigated punishment.

SECTION 3 JOINT CRIMES

[Table of Contents](#)

Article 25 A joint crime refers to an intentional crime committed by two or more persons jointly.

A negligent crime committed by two or more persons jointly shall not be punished as a joint crime; however, those who should bear criminal responsibility shall be individually punished according to the crimes they have committed.

Article 26 A principal criminal refers to any person who organizes and leads a criminal group in carrying out criminal activities or plays a principal role in a joint crime.

A criminal group refers to a relatively stable criminal organization formed by three or more persons for the purpose of committing crimes jointly.

Any ringleader who organizes or leads a criminal group shall be punished on the basis of all the crimes that the criminal group has committed.

Any principal criminal not included in Paragraph 3 shall be punished on the basis of all the crimes that he participates in or that he organizes or directs.

Article 27 An accomplice refers to any person who plays a secondary or auxiliary role in a joint crime.

An accomplice shall be given a lighter or mitigated punishment or be exempted from punishment.

Article 28 Anyone who is coerced to participate in a crime shall be given a mitigated punishment or be

exempted from punishment in the light of the circumstances of the crime he commits.

Article 29 Anyone who instigates another to commit a crime shall be punished according to the role he plays in a joint crime. Anyone who instigates a person under the age of 18 to commit a crime shall be given a heavier punishment.

If the instigated person has not committed the instigated crime, the instigator may be given a lighter or mitigated punishment.

SECTION 4 CRIMES COMMITTED BY A UNIT

[Table of Contents](#)

Article 30 Any company, enterprise, institution, State organ, or organization that commits an act that endangers society, which is prescribed by law as a crime committed by a unit, shall bear criminal responsibility.

Article 31 Where a unit commits a crime, it shall be fined, and the persons who are directly in charge and the other persons who are directly responsible for the crime shall be given criminal punishment. Where it is otherwise provided for in the Specific Provisions of this Law or in other laws, those provisions shall prevail.

Chapter III Punishments

[Table of Contents](#)

SECTION 1 TYPES OF PUNISHMENTS

[Table of Contents](#)

Article 32 Punishments are divided into principal punishments and supplementary punishments.

Article 33 The principal punishments are as follows:

- (1) public surveillance;
- (2) criminal detention;
- (3) fixed-term imprisonment;
- (4) life imprisonment; and
- (5) the death penalty.

Article 34 The supplementary punishments are as follows:

- (1) fine;
- (2) deprivation of political rights; and
- (3) confiscation of property.

Supplementary punishments may be imposed independently.

Article 35 Deportation may be imposed independently or supplementarily to a foreigner who commits a crime.

Article 36 If a victim suffers economic losses as a result of a crime, the criminal shall, in addition to receiving a criminal punishment according to law, be sentenced to compensation for the economic losses in the light of the circumstances.

If a criminal who is liable for civil compensation is sentenced to a fine at the same time but his property is not sufficient to pay both the compensation and the fine, or if he

is sentenced to confiscation of property at the same time, he shall, first of all, bear his liability for civil compensation to the victim.

Article 37 If the circumstances of a person's crime are minor and do not require criminal punishment, he may be exempted from it; however, he may, depending on the different circumstances of the case, be reprimanded or ordered to make a statement of repentance, offer an apology or pay compensation for the losses, or be subjected to administrative penalty or administrative sanctions by the competent department.

SECTION 2 PUBLIC SURVEILLANCE

[Table of Contents](#)

Article 38 The term of public surveillance shall be not less than three months but not more than two years.

Where a criminal is sentenced to public surveillance, the sentence shall be executed by a public security organ.

Article 39 Any criminal who is sentenced to public surveillance shall observe the following during the term in which his sentence is being executed:

(1) observe laws and administrative rules and regulations, and submit to supervision;

(2) exercise no right of freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession or of demonstration without the approval of the organ executing the public surveillance;

(3) report on his own activities as required by the organ executing the public surveillance;

(4) observe the regulations for receiving visitors stipulated by the organ executing the public surveillance; and

(5) report to obtain approval from the organ executing the public surveillance for any departure from the city or county he lives in or for any change in residence.

Criminals sentenced to public surveillance shall, while engaged in labour, receive equal pay for equal work.

Article 40 Upon the expiration of a term of public surveillance, the executing organ shall immediately