

59 executions sound warning

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AT least 59 people have been executed, many accused of robbery on China's railroads and highways, in a clear warning against crime during the Lunar New Year peak travel season, official media reported.

Six people were executed in Shanghai Saturday for a spree of train robberies that began in 1988, the official media reported yesterday.

Another six were put to death in the southern city of Huizhou for robbing vehicles on the roads of the prosperous Pearl River Delta, the Guangzhou newspaper *Yangcheng Evening News* reported.

The newspaper also said 45 people were executed in Guangzhou on Saturday - 19 for large-scale theft, 17 for robbery and nine for murdering or wounding others - and two more were executed in the nearby Shenzhen special economic zone.

The executions were part of a crackdown against robbery and theft in the Guangzhou region, where several mass meetings were held Saturday morning to pronounce and carry out sentences of more than 1,100 criminals.

Executions, which are carried out by a single gunshot to the back of the head, are common in China, but it is unusual to have so many reported for a single day.