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First UA 107/24 Index: ASA 36/8823/2024 Singapore of December 6, 2024

SINGAPORE MALAYSIAN MAN AT RISK OF POSSIBLE EXECUTION

Pannir Selvam Pranthaman, a Malaysian national, is at risk of execution in Singapore after his judicial appeals were rejected. He was convicted in 2017 for importing 51.84 grams of diamorphine (heroin). The court acknowledged that he only transported the drugs. However, he was sentenced to the mandatory death penalty because the prosecution did not issue a certificate of substantive assistance.

Singapore has increased its use of executions, with four men hanged in November alone. We call on the Singaporean government to commute Pannir's death sentence. The government must also establish an official moratorium on executions as a step toward ending the death penalty.

Write to the Prime Minister of Singapore urging him to:

- Commute the death sentence of Pannir Selvam Pranthaman and establish an official moratorium on all executions, as a first critical step towards full abolition of the death penalty.

Write to:

Lawrence Wong
Prime Minister of Singapore
Office of the Prime Minister
Orchard Road
Istana, Singapore 238823
Email: pmo_hq@pmo.gov.sg
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Pannir Selvam Pranthaman, a Malaysian national, is a talented musician. While on death row in Singapore, he has written poems and songs, collaborating with other Malaysian artists. His creativity has become a source of inspiration despite his circumstances.

On May 2, 2017, Pannir, then 29, was convicted of importing 51.84 grams of heroin into Singapore and sentenced to the mandatory death penalty. The court recognized his role as limited to that of a courier. However, the prosecution did not grant a certificate of substantive assistance, which would have allowed the judge to impose a lesser sentence.

Under Singapore's Misuse of Drugs Act, amended in 2013, judges can avoid the mandatory death penalty only if the defendant qualifies as a courier and either receives a certificate of substantive assistance or has a substantial mental impairment. Without this certificate, the court had no discretion in sentencing. This shift of decision-making power to the prosecution undermines judicial independence and violates the principle of a fair trial, including the equality of arms between the prosecution and defense.

Pannir's conviction relied on the presumption of knowledge of the drugs under Singapore's Misuse of Drugs Act. This legal framework shifts the burden of proof to the defendant, undermining the right to be presumed innocent. These presumptions lower the standard of evidence required in capital cases, violating international human rights standards.

Pannir's execution was originally scheduled for May 24, 2019, but it was halted one day prior to allow for extraordinary appeals. Those appeals have since been rejected, and he is now at risk of receiving a new execution notice.

International law prohibits mandatory death penalties and limits the death penalty to the "most serious crimes," defined as intentional killings. Drug-related offenses do not meet this threshold. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases and continues to call on Singapore to abolish it. Globally, 113 countries have abolished the death penalty, and 144 are abolitionist in law or practice. Singapore remains among the few nations that still carry out executions for drug offenses.

Please take action as soon as possible until March 1, 2025! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.