



ADPAN NEWSLETTER NO. 5, 2012 **December 2012**

This is the fifth and final edition of the ADPAN Newsletter in 2012. It provides links to significant death penalty news stories from across the Asia Pacific region as reported in the media during December.

The Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN) is an independent, impartial network of individuals, NGOs, lawyers and activists from 26 countries that are committed to working for an end to the death penalty in their own countries and across the Asia Pacific region.

Please distribute the ADPAN Newsletter widely, pass on to your networks, place online and use in any campaigning work against the death penalty.

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GOOD NEWS

INDIA

Govt gets death sentence of 94 nationals abroad commuted

The Indian government announced it has sought the pardon of 94 Indian nationals facing the death penalty abroad. Prisoners on death row in the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Kuwait, China, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Egypt and Pakistan have had their life sentences commuted.

07/12/2012 – *The Economic Times*

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-12-07/news/35670743_1_death-sentence-hussain-mydeen-life-imprisonment

MALAYSIA

EU Envoy: Malaysia moving towards abolition of death sentence

EU ambassador and head of delegation to Malaysia Luc Vandebron said that Malaysia had seen positive developments towards abolishing the death penalty, citing the higher number of death sentences than executions as evidence of a change in mood. He also drew attention to the statements in favour of abolition by influential and senior personalities.

12/12/2012 – *The Star*

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/12/12/nation/12441416&sec=nation>

THAILAND

Thailand must learn from Philippines on abolishing death penalty, says expert

Te, a former coordinator of the Manila-based Free Legal Assistant Group and an assistant professor of law at the University of the Philippines, has advised Thailand to use the Philippines as an example for abolishing the death penalty. He has pointed out that Thailand should be able to abolish the death penalty, as Buddhists are in the majority, and Buddhism teaches people not to take the lives of people. Thai legal experts and activists met Te in Bangkok on 9th December for an event organised by the Thai chapter of Amnesty International, where they noted the lack of progress, saying many Buddhist monks are not supportive of abolition. They further deplored the lack of interest of major Thai political parties in abolition efforts. The debate has reached the senate committee's level, but attempts to have it considered by the Parliament committee on human rights have been unsuccessful.

10/12/2012 – *The Nation*

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/politics/Thailand-must-learn-from-Philippines-on-abolishing-30195841.html>

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

CHINA

Beijing lawyer denounces execution for organs at hospital

Lawyer Han Bing from Beijing H & J Law Firm has spoken out against the execution of a death row inmate, whose organs were subsequently used for transplants, despite the Supreme Court's call for reviewing the case against the accused. The government has announced changes to ensure that death row prisoners are not executed for the purpose of organ transplants, yet many fear that this would simply be aimed at appeasing the international community, while the practice would continue on the sly.

09/12/2012 – *Epoch Times*

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/china-news/beijing-lawyer-denounces-execution-for-organs-at-hospital-323245.html>

JAPAN

Japan death row inmates want prior warning

According to the results of a survey carried out by Mizuho Fukushima, deputy chairwoman of the non-partisan Parliamentary League for the Abolition of the Death Penalty, a majority of death row prisoners want to be warned of their execution in advance. Many said they wanted the opportunity to say goodbye to their loved ones. A majority of death row prisoners would also welcome a review of the current method of execution, with a large proportion saying they would prefer lethal injection.

29/12/2012 – *Channel News Asia, Japan Times*

http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/1245067/1.html

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/12/31/national/record-133-inmates-held-on-death-row/>

Record 133 inmates held on death row

133 prisoners were on death row in Japan at the end of 2012, the highest number on record, according to the latest Justice Ministry figures. There has been an increase in the number of prisoners on death row for the third consecutive year. Seven were executed and nine were given death sentences in the last year.

31/12/2012 – *The Japan Times*

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/12/31/national/record-133-inmates-held-on-death-row/>

PAKISTAN

Abolish death penalty in India, Pakistan: Burney

Former Pakistan federal minister Ansar Burney has advocated for a total abolition of the death penalty, labelling it a blot on humanity. He called for addressing religious fanaticism encouraged by Pakistani religious leaders, the “root cause” of violence leading to death sentences.

13/12/2012 – *Hindustan Times*

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Punjab/Chandigarh/Abolish-death-penalty-in-India-Pakistan-Burney/SP-Article1-972319.aspx>

SINGAPORE

Death penalty debate divides Singapore

Debates over the death penalty in Singapore continue, while Singaporean laws on the death penalty have recently been amended. Lawyers will now be able to obtain 'certificates of cooperation' for their clients, showing that those convicted under death penalty laws have cooperated with the authorities by providing information about bigger players in the narcotics industry. M. Ravi, a human rights lawyer and ADPAN member from Singapore, emphasised that the call for substantive information from his clients has come too late and that this should have happened upon arrest.

Judges will be given more discretion in dealing with death penalty cases, allowing them to commute death sentences for murder and drug-related offences to life imprisonment in certain circumstances.

We Believe in Second Chances, members of ADPAN, are part of a growing human rights movement that has called for the abolition of the death penalty in Singapore. Co-founder Damien Chng welcomes the progress made and the recent open discussion of the issue among politicians. Eugene Tan, an assistant law professor at the Singapore Management University and Singaporean Member of Parliament, said the abolition movement will strengthen over time as attitudes are changing. The government has stated that amendments can only be made after continuously reviewing the laws and has rejected calls for abolition.

02/12/2012 – Al Jazeera

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/11/2012112811012138691.html>

TAIWAN

Ma never said goal is to abolish capital punishment: presidential office

President Ma Ying-jeou stated the government had never committed to abolishing the death penalty, though it is working to reduce the use of the death penalty.

The next execution of death row inmates in Taiwan is "absolutely possible" before February and abolition is an unrealistic goal, according to deputy justice minister Chen Shou-huang.

Chairman of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Su Tseng-chang stated that Taiwan is not ready to embrace abolition and that there is a need for legal provisions and education. Ending the death penalty also requires a strong consensus among the public, which he claims is lacking in Taiwan.

12/2012 – Want China Times, Taiwan News, China Post

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20121221000026&cid=1103>

http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news_content.php?id=2106915

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2012/12/24/365042/Taiwan-not.htm>

EAS officials call for 'halt' to death penalty in Taiwan

Joelle Hivonnet, who is based in the China division of the external action service (EAS), said that the EAS "would welcome" an extension of Taiwan's temporary moratorium on the death penalty and that they "sincerely hope that Taiwan will not resume the death penalty but, rather, will strive for its abolition". She praised the efforts made by Taiwan to embrace democracy, adding that the EAS was "a great respecter" of Taiwan's adherence to human rights.

11/12/2012 – The Parliament

<http://www.theparliament.com/policy-focus/foreign-affairs/foreign-affairs-article/newsarticle/eas-official-calls-for-halt-to-death-penalty-in-taiwan/#.URPRPBOiddc>

Taiwan condemned over executions

On 21 December, six prisoners on death row were executed without prior notification to families or lawyers. These were the first executions carried out in 2012.

22/12/2012 – IPS News, BBC News

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/01/executions-elicite-fears-of-authoritarianism/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-20822542>

GLOBAL NEWS

UN

Vote shows steady support for ending the death penalty

Global support for abolishing the death penalty is rising, Amnesty International said after the UN General Assembly (UNGA) voted overwhelmingly in favour of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty. A record 111 countries voted in favour of a moratorium on the death penalty at a UN General Assembly meeting on 20th December, with 41 against and 34 abstentions. 2 more countries voted in favour than in 2010. “Although the UNGA vote is not legally binding, it does express the will of the international community and is a strong signal from the world body,” said Jose Luis Diaz, Amnesty International’s representative at the United Nations in New York

21/12/2012 – Amnesty International

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/un-vote-shows-steady-support-ending-death-penalty-2012-12-20>

US

Death Sentences Near Record Low

The death penalty is becoming rare in the US, with only nine US states carrying out executions in 2012, the lowest number in the past 20 years, according to a report by the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC). The number of new death sentences in 2012 was the second lowest since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. Connecticut abolished the death penalty in 2012. At present, more than half of US states (30) are either abolitionist for all crimes or have not carried out an execution in five years, and almost half (23) have not done so in ten years.

12/2012 – Death Penalty Information Center, World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, Religion News Service

<http://deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/2012YearEnd.pdf>

<http://www.worldcoalition.org/dpic-death-penalty-information-center-usa-united-states-stats-abolition-executions-sentences.html>

<http://ncronline.org/news/peace-justice/death-penalty-grows-rarer-us>