

EXTRA 20/02

Death pen**SINGAPORE Anthony Ler (m), aged 34, former web designer**

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Anthony Ler is facing execution following the Court of Appeal's dismissal of an appeal against his death sentence. The hearing, which took place on 4 March, is reported to have lasted only seven minutes. He was sentenced to death in December 2001 after being found guilty of persuading a 15-year-old boy to kill his wife. The boy, who was convicted of murder, was sentenced to be detained indefinitely.

Anthony Ler is reported to be planning to appeal to the President for clemency.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The death penalty is mandatory in Singapore for murder, drug trafficking, treason and certain firearms offences.

Singapore, with a population of four million, is believed to have one of the highest rates of executions per capita in the world. Recent government figures show that out of 340 people executed between 1991 and 2000, 89 were executed for murder. Executions are by hanging and take place on Friday mornings at dawn. Families of convicts are normally only informed of the impending execution one week beforehand. There is almost no public debate about the use of the death penalty in the country.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The death penalty is an inherently unjust and arbitrary punishment, however heinous the crime for which it is inflicted. Studies have shown that it is more likely to be imposed on those who are poorer, less educated and more vulnerable than average. The death penalty is irrevocable, yet the risk of error in applying it is inescapable. While Amnesty International recognizes the need to combat violent crime, there is no convincing evidence that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other punishments.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- urging the President to commute the death sentence passed on Anthony Ler;
- expressing sympathy for the victims of crime, but pointing out that executions have a brutalizing effect on society and cause further suffering for the convict's relatives;
- expressing your unconditional opposition to the death penalty as a violation of one of the most fundamental of human rights - the right to life;
- recognizing the need to combat violent crime, but emphasizing that there is no proof that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other punishments, and appealing to the authorities to find a more humane way to tackle this problem.

**APPEALS TO:**

The President  
His Excellency S R Nathan  
Office of the President  
Istana Annexe,  
Orchard Road

Republic of Singapore 0922  
☎ **President S R Nathan, Singapore**  
**Faxes: + 65 738 4673**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

The Prime Minister  
The Honourable Goh Chok Tong  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Istana Annexe,  
Orchard Road  
Republic of Singapore 0923  
**Telegrams: Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Singapore**  
**Faxes: + 65 732 4627**  
**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

Minister of Law  
Professor Shanmugham Jayakumar  
Ministry of Law  
250 North Bridge Road  
07-00 Raffles City Tower  
Republic of Singapore 179101  
**Telegrams: Minister of Law, Singapore**  
**Faxes: + 65 332 8842**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Minister of Home Affairs  
Wong Kan Seng  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
Phoenix Park  
Tanjong Road  
Republic of Singapore 247904  
**Telegrams: Minister of Home Affairs, Singapore**  
**Faxes: + 65 734 4420**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

and to diplomatic representatives of Singapore accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**