

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Penalty

20 July 1994

SINGAPORE

Abdullah A. Rahman, aged 36, Malaysian national
Lim Choon Chye, aged 37

On 11 July 1994 the lawyers of Abdullah A. Rahman and Lim Choon Chye lost their attempt to reopen the appeals of both men on the grounds of new evidence. Amnesty International now fears that both men are at risk of imminent execution.

Abdullah A. Rahman was arrested on 21 March 1990 and sentenced to death on 29 January 1993 for trafficking 76.3gm of heroin. His co-accused, Abdul Rashid, had testified that Abdullah was involved in the drug trafficking but he has now retracted his testimony.

Lim Choon Chye was arrested in July 1992 after drugs were found in his room and was sentenced to death for drug trafficking in 1993. However, another death-row prisoner, Leong Wing Kong, has now stated that Lim Choon Chye was not present during the drug transaction at the flat.

The Court of Appeal rejected their appeals and decided that their first decision was final as the Court of Appeal has no jurisdiction to hear fresh evidence.

Their only hope for clemency now lies with President Ong Teng Cheong who has the power to commute these sentences.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty was employed during the colonial period and was retained after Singapore became an independent republic in August 1965. Anyone found in possession of more than 15 grams of heroin, 30 grams of morphine, 30 grams of cocaine or 500 grams of cannabis is presumed guilty of drug trafficking and is liable to a mandatory death sentence.

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

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the imposition of the death sentence on Abdullah A. Rahman and Lim Choon Chye and urging the President of Singapore to commute both sentences;
- urging the authorities to review the fresh evidence and to consider a retrial in both cases;
- stating Amnesty International's unconditional opposition to the death penalty, and urging that all existing death sentences be commuted and that no more be imposed in the future.

APPEALS TO

The President

His Excellency Ong Teng Cheong
Office of the President
Istana
Orchard Road

Republic of Singapore 0922

Telegrams: President Ong Teng Cheong, Singapore

Faxes: +65 732 4627 (for the attention of The President)

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

The Prime Minister

The Honourable Goh Chok Tong

Office of the Prime Minister

Istana Annexe

Orchard Road

Republic of Singapore 0923

Faxes: +65 732 4627

Minister for Law

Professor Shanmugham Jayakumar

Ministry of Law

250 North Bridge Road

Raffles City Tower 21-00

Republic of Singapore 0617

and to diplomatic representatives of Singapore accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 August 1994.