

ADPAN NEWSLETTER 2/11 March and April 2011

INTRODUCTION

This edition of the ADPAN Newsletter covers the months of March and April and provides links to significant death penalty news stories from across the Asia Pacific region, including statements issued by ADPAN, its members (names in bold) and other related stories. This edition includes information on the following countries: **China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Thailand** and is divided into several sections:

- Significant Regional Developments
- Death Penalty News from Asia and the Pacific including ADPAN statements
- Significant World News

The Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN) is an independent, impartial network of individuals, NGOs, lawyers and activists committed to working for an end to the death penalty in their own countries and across the Asia Pacific region. For further information contact the ADPAN Coordinator adpan@amnesty.org (<http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/apro/aproweb.nsf/pages/adpan>).

Please distribute the ADPAN Newsletter widely, place on websites, pass on to those who might be interested and use in any campaigning in support of work against the death penalty including online activities such as Facebook , twitter and other online activity.

SIGNIFICANT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL: 2010 DEATH PENALTY AND EXECUTIONS REPORT

Death Penalty in 2010: Executing countries left isolated after decade of progress

On 28 March Amnesty International (AI) launched its 2010 Death Penalty and Executions Report, showing a decline in the number of executions, from 714 in 2009 to 527 in 2010. In the Asia and Pacific region, there was some progress (the Pacific region did not carry out any executions or pass death sentences in the last decade; the President of Mongolia introduced a moratorium on death penalty and executions have come down) but Asia remains one of the regions responsible for the most executions. In 2010, in Asia, executions were carried out in North Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Taiwan, Japan and Malaysia, and China. China continues to hold the record for the highest number of executions: numbers are believed to be in the thousands.

28/03/2011, *Amnesty International*

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/death-penalty-2010-executing-countries-left-isolated-after-decade-progress>

28/03/2011, *Philippine Daily Enquirer*

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view/20110328-328016/Global-executions-decline-despite-China-hangings>

28/03/2011, *The Guardian*

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/28/us-china-death-penalty-amnesty>

28/03/2011, *ABC Radio Australia*

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat/stories/201103/s3175925.htm>

MALDIVES

Parliament accepts amendment to Clemency Act to uphold death sentences

On 18 April, Parliament accepted an amendment to the Clemency Act presented by the Jumhoree Party. If the amendment is passed, the President will no longer have the authority to grant clemency to those sentenced to death.

13/04/2011, *Haveeru*

<http://www.haveeru.com.mv/english/details/35884>

19/04/2011, *Minivan News*

<http://minivannews.com/politics/parliament-accepts-amendment-to-clemency-act-to-uphold-death-sentences-18930>

UNITED NATIONS

14 Countries from Asia and the Pacific signed the “Note Verbale” to the UN Secretary General (A/65/779) objecting to a moratorium

On 11 March, 53 UN Member States sent a "Note Verbale" (a Statement of Disassociation), to the UN Secretary General stating that they are "in persistent objection to any attempt to impose a moratorium on the use of the death penalty or its abolition" in reference to General Assembly (GA) resolution 65/206, calling for a "Moratorium on the use of the death penalty". The following 14 countries from Asia and the Pacific signed the Note Verbale: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

11/03/2011, *UN General Assembly*

www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/779

http://asiapacific.amnesty.org/apro/aproweb.nsf/pages/adpan_11032011

DEATH PENALTY NEWS FROM ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

CHINA

Seven Uyghurs sentenced to death

On 23 March, the Supreme People's Court in the north-western region of Xinjiang ordered the executions of seven ethnic minority Uyghur men, three of whom were reportedly sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve, a sentence that is normally commuted to life imprisonment after two years. They were convicted of homicide and robbery, but sources said that a reference to "terrorism" in official news reports showed it was being politicized by the authorities. Xinjiang has been characterized by longstanding ethnic discrimination, tensions and separatist activities.

23/03/2011, *Radio Free Asia*

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/sentenced-03232011141520.html>

CHINA/PHILIPPINES

China executes 3 Filipinos

On 30 March, three Filipinos were executed in China (two in Xiamen and one in Guangzhou) for drug trafficking despite appeals from the Philippine Vice-President. In the Philippines, prayer vigils and Masses were held, while a rally of overseas foreign workers took place. Elizabeth Batain, Sally Ordinario-Villanueva and Ramon Credo were reportedly the first Filipinos to be sentenced to date in China for drug offences.

30/03/2011, *Reuters*

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/30/us-china-executions-idUSTRE72T0Z620110330>

INDONESIA

Death for corruption is wrong, Indonesian government says

On 31 March, Justice and Human Rights Minister Patrialis Akbar withdrew proposed amendments to the Anticorruption Law and said: "The death penalty was not the way to go about preventing corruption [...] it was against accepted human rights norms [and] we used the international conventions [on human rights] as our reference".

01/04/2011, *The Jakarta Globe*

<http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/death-for-corruption-is-wrong-indonesian-govt-says/432832>

01/04/2011, *The Jakarta Post*

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/04/01/patrialis-postpones-revisions-anticorruption-law.html>

JAPAN

Kato sentenced to hang over '08 Akihabara killing spree

On 24 March, Kato told the court: "Now I think I should not have committed the incident and regret what I have done. I feel sorry for the victims and their families and the people injured". He has been sentenced to death for a variety of crimes including killing 4 pedestrians in Tokyo in 2008.

24/03/2011, *The Japan Times*

http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20110324x3.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+japantimes+%28The+Japan+Times%3A+All+Stories%29

Death sentences finalized for 3 men who committed crimes as minors

On 30 March, the Supreme Court confirmed the death sentence for three young men convicted of killing four people in 1994 aged 18-19.

02/04/2011, *Japan Today*

<http://www.japantoday.com/category/crime/view/death-sentences-finalized-for-3-men-who-committed-crimes-as-minors>

ADPAN and Amnesty International call for Japanese prisoner on death row for 43 years to be granted a stay of execution and removed from death row

10 March was Hakamada Iwao's 75th birthday. Hakamada has been under sentence of death for 43 years. He was convicted of murder in 1968 after an unfair trial. Now he shows signs of seriously disturbed thinking and behaviour and the Japanese Prison authorities have refused any access to his medical records. ADPAN together with Amnesty International are supporting the efforts of his family and support groups as they organise several events in Japan to draw attention to his case and call for his release.

10/03/2011

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA22/002/2011/en/29e8ffa5-7e94-4bb9-a35a-4c6523ab0a39/asa220022011en.html>

MALAYSIA

Two men sentenced to death for drug trafficking

On 29 March, the High Court in Shah Alam sentenced two men to death for drug trafficking: 40-year-old technician Yeoh Thian Hock, and lorry driver See Kek Chuen.

29/03/2011, *Malay Mail Online*

<http://www.mmail.com.my/content/67897-two-men-sentenced-death-drug-trafficking>

MALAYSIA/SINGAPORE

Death for Singaporean single mother for drug trafficking

On 18 March, the Shah Alam High Court sentenced Noor Atiqah M. Lasim, a 27-year-old Singaporean single mother, to death for drugs trafficking. She was convicted under the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 after she was convicted two years ago.

18/03/2011, *Bernama Media*

<http://sg.news.yahoo.com/death-singaporean-single-mother-drug-trafficking-20110317-215320-692.html>

NORTH KOREA

Shot for stealing US\$ 20 of corn as public executions are back

A North Korean refugee who fled to South Korea reported that, according to the *Daily North Korean* (a website dedicated to Kim Jong-il's regime), on 11 December 2010 four people were sentenced to death for petty crimes, such as stealing a litre of oil from a transformer and 50kg of corn and were publicly executed. Officials forced the residents of Seungho district to witness the execution. So far, only deserters and traitors were executed in public.

12/04/2011, *Asia News*

[http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Shot-for-stealing-US\\$-20-of-corn-as-public-executions-are-back-21277.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Shot-for-stealing-US$-20-of-corn-as-public-executions-are-back-21277.html)

PAKISTAN

Pakistan death row prisoners 'languish in jail'

The Asian Human Rights Commission published a report in March 2011 stating that more than 8,000 prisoners have been sentenced to death in the last 20 years, most are from Punjab Province. Among these are foreigners, females, young and old people. Human rights organizations and civil society activists in Pakistan are against the death penalty claiming it is inhuman.

15/03/2011, *BBC*

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12745032>

15/03/2010, *Asian Human Rights Commission*

<http://www.humanrights.asia/news/ahrc-news/AHRC-ART-020-2011>

Killer of Christian Brothers Gets Death Sentence in Pakistan

On 18 April, an anti-terrorism court in Faisalabad district sentenced to death Maqsood alias Soodi, a Muslim man who killed two Christian brothers accused of blasphemy in June 2010. Pakistan blasphemy laws are commonly abused to settle personal scores.

20/04/2011, *Christian Post*

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/killer-of-christian-brothers-gets-death-sentence-in-pakistan-49907/>

Pakistan's Christian prison counsellor

Arthur Wilson, an ADPAN member from the Prison Fellowship, speaks about his work to the BBC working as a counsellor with Muslim and Christian offenders including those on death row in Lahore. See the links below for the interview with the BBC and a live interview in Hindi.

18/04/2011, *BBC*

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13035228>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/urdu/multimedia/2011/04/110405_prisoners_rehab_as.shtml

PAKISTAN/SAUDI ARABIA

Murder, adultery charges: Three Pakistanis sent to the gallows in Saudi Arabia

On 29 March, three Pakistanis, Rahmul Wahab, Bashir Hassan Afridi and Mohammad Abdur Rehman, imprisoned in Saudi Arabia for the past 13 years, have been sentenced to death by a Sharia court on murder and adultery charges. They have appealed.

10/04/2011, *The Express Tribune*

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/146630/murder-adultery-charges-three-pakistanis-sent-to-the-gallows-in-saudi-arabia/>

SINGAPORE

Briton appeals sentence over book on Singapore's use of death penalty

On 11 April, Alan Shadrake appealed against his 6-week sentence and fine of S\$20,000 received in November 2010 for 'scandalizing the judiciary' following publication of his book *"Once a Jolly Hangman: Singapore Justice in the Dock"*. This is one of many defamation cases brought against political opponents and foreign publications to intimidate critics and spread a climate of censorship. His book states how the death penalty in Singapore is applied unevenly based on economic and political factors. Donna Guest, Amnesty Asia Pacific deputy director, said "If Singapore aspires to be a global media city, it needs to respect standards for freedom of expression and get rid of both criminal defamation laws and the death penalty."

11/04/2011, *New York Times*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/12/world/asia/12iht-singapore12.html>

13/04/2011, *Asian Correspondent*

<http://asiancorrespondent.com/52359/singapore-death-book-gets-sympathetic-hearing/>

STOP PRESS! Alan Shadrake began to serve his 6-week sentence in a Singaporean prison on 1 June. ADPAN had called for his immediate and unconditional release. See responses by ADPAN members, Singapore Anti-Death Penalty Campaign (SADPC) and Think Centre (TC):

<http://www.thinkcentre.org/article.cfm?ArticleID=3090>

A second edition of the author's book is now available in Malaysian book stores and direct through the publisher Strategic Information and Research Development Centre - SIRD or by emailing: gerakbudaya@pd.jaring.my and quoting ISBN: 9789675832215

SINGAPORE/MALAYSIA

Court upholds death sentence against Vui Kong in drug case

On 4 April, the Court of Appeal has dismissed the appeal of Yong Vui Kong on the grounds that he had been denied a fair clemency process. The 23 year-old Malaysian national was sentenced to death in Singapore for drug trafficking. Many have campaigned for Yong Vui Kong including his lawyer, **M. Ravi**, ADPAN member; the Singapore Anti Death Penalty Campaign; Think Centre; Yong's family; ADPAN; Amnesty International and others.

05/04/2011, *The Star*

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2011/4/5/nation/8417471&sec=nation>

ADPAN Urgent Action

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA36/002/2011/en/08f59632-69e5-4177-8fad-f103f6f7b49f/asa360022011en.html>

Please also see the **joint statement** from ADPAN members in Singapore, the Singapore Anti Death Penalty Campaign and Think Centre:

5/04/2011, *Rachel Zeng blog*

<http://rachelzeng.wordpress.com/2011/04/05/joint-statement-by-think-centre-and-singapore-anti-death-penalty-campaign-on-yong-vui-kongs-appeal-verdict/>

SRI LANKA

Three army men sentenced to death

On 30 March, the Colombo High Court imposed the death sentence on three soldiers who were convicted of abduction, rape and murder of a 22-year-old woman in Jaffna in 1996.

31/03/2011 *Daily Mirror Sri Lanka*

<http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/front-page-news/39817.html>

TAIWAN

ADPAN regrets yet more executions in Taiwan

On 4 March, five men were executed by shooting and none of the family members were informed. This brings the number of executions to nine since 2010 and goes against the global trend towards abolition. On the same day, ADPAN called into question the country's stated intention to abolish the death penalty.

On 24 March, President Ma Ying-jeou said that Taiwan is dedicated to human rights protection by its ratification of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). He also confirmed that death sentences will still be carried out according to the country's laws. There are currently 41 death-row inmates on death row.

On 28 March, the Taiwan Alliance to End Death Penalty (TAEDP) and other anti-death penalty groups, including Amnesty International (AI), accused the Taiwanese government of failing to abolish the death penalty. The **Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty (TAEDP)**, a member of ADPAN, pointed out that "carrying out any executions at this point in time would violate both domestic and international law." Kao Yung-chen, TAEDP deputy convener, said that the 10 executions carried out since 2010 are illegal because the Minister of Justice Tseng Yung-fu signed the execution warrants before the President had been able to receive the applications for amnesty by the prisoners.

04/03/2011 *ADPAN Statement, ASA 38/001/2010*

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA38/001/2011/en/461a527b-2471-4312-a1df-f8d93920e522/asa380012011en.html>

(Chinese version: <http://www.taedp.org.tw/index.php?load=read&id=853>)

4/03/2011 *BBC*

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12651232>

06/03/2011 *Taipei Times*

<http://taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2011/03/06/2003497481/1>

24/03/2011, *Focus Taiwan*

http://focustaiwan.tw/ShowNews/WebNews_Detail.aspx?Type=aPL&ID=201103240018

29/03/2011, *TAEDP*

<http://www.taedp.org.tw/index.php?load=read&id=849>

THAILAND

Thailand far from abolishing death

According to Amnesty International's Death Penalty and Executions report published on 28 March, there were no executions during 2010 but seven death sentences were passed which brings the number of people on death row to 708. Nearly half have been convicted of drug-related offences. The Supreme Court has confirmed sentences for 65 of them.

Pairoj Polpetch from the Union of Civil Liberty said that although the government's human rights development plan (2009 – 2013) stated Thailand should abolish the death penalty by 2013, the reality is much more complicated. He explained "We're trying to push for [the abolition] but in practice it depends on related agencies and this may lead to delay. The second issue is that of Thai people's attitudes; even monks support the death penalty. They think [people who killed others] ought to receive equal punishment."

31/03/2011 *The Nation*

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/home/Thailand-far-from-abolishing-death-penalty-Amnesty-30152176.html>

VIETNAM

District Party official's killers sentenced to death

On 7 April, Ho Chi Minh City Court sentenced to death Nguyen Trong Nhan, 31, and Luong Hoai Sang for murder that took place in September 2010.

08/04/2011, *Saigon*

<http://www.saigon-gpdaily.com.vn/Law/2011/4/91282/>

SIGNIFICANT WORLD NEWS

USA

Illinois abolishes death penalty

The US state of Illinois became the 16th state to abolish the death penalty. This will take effect on 1 July, thus making permanent a moratorium on executions signed by former Governor George Ryan in 2000, around concerns that innocent people could be executed.

09/03/2011, *BBC*

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-12693741>

INDIA, UK, DENMARK

Lethal injection treads murky ethical waters

The US Drug Enforcement Agency confiscated several states' supplies of sodium thiopental (ST), a drug used for execution by lethal injection. Several pharmaceutical companies have been involved in the ethical discussion regarding the use of drugs in death penalty sentences. The have included: Kayem (India), Dream Pharma (Britain), and Lundbeck (Denmark).

8/05/2011, *Al Jazeera*

<http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/05/20115291535463497.html>

In details:

- Indian company (7/04/2011 *The Wall Street Journal*):

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704013604576246813390152424.html>

- British company (6/01/11, *BBC 4*; 15/04/2011, *Reuters*)

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/9342000/9342976.stm>;

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/15/britain-usa-executions-idUSLDE73E0G220110415>

- Danish company (13/03/11, *Global Post*)

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/europe/110512/death-penalty-lethal-injection-lundbeck-pentobarbital>

DEATH PENALTY WORLDWIDE DATABASE

On 14 April at the Council of Europe, the Center for International Human Rights at Northwestern University School of Law (Chicago, USA) in partnership with the **World Coalition against the Death Penalty** launched a major international database on the law and practice of the death penalty across the world. The database includes statistics and information on laws, death row conditions and political developments. The researchers who produced this database have found that in many of these countries there is often a lively debate around the merits of abolition.

www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org