

EXTRA 33/01

Imm.**SINGAPORE** Zulfikar Bin Mustaffah, aged 32, unemployed

Zulfikar Bin Mustaffah faces imminent execution following rejection of his appeal against his death sentence earlier this year. His remaining recourse is to petition the President, who has the power to grant clemency.

Zulfikar Bin Mustaffah was sentenced to death in November 2000 after being found in possession of a package containing approximately 70 grams of heroin. A drug addict since the age of 14, he dropped out of school at 15 and has spent most of his life in drug rehabilitation centres or in detention.

Zulfikar Bin Mustaffah was unemployed at the time of his arrest and had reportedly found it difficult to find work due to his criminal record for drug addiction.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 provided. Studies have shown that it is more likely to be imposed on those who are poorer, less educated and more vulnerable than average. The risk of error in applying the death penalty is inescapable, yet it is irrevocable. While Amnesty International recognizes the need to combat drug trafficking, there is no convincing evidence that the death penalty deters would-be traffickers more effectively than other punishments. Furthermore, there is always a risk that drug abusers may be executed, while those who mastermind the crime of trafficking evade arrest and punishment.

The death penalty is mandatory in Singapore for drug trafficking, murder, treason and certain firearms offences. Anyone over the age of 18 found in possession of more than 15 grams of heroin, 30 grams of morphine or cocaine, or 500 grams of cannabis is presumed, unless the contrary can be proved, to be trafficking in the drug and faces a mandatory death sentence. Persistent drug addicts who have been admitted more than twice to a drugs rehabilitation centre are treated as criminals who may be imprisoned for up to 13 years and caned. Despite these draconian anti-drugs laws, drug addiction continues to be a problem.

Singapore, with a population of just over 3 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, 247 had been convicted of drug trafficking. 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 no public debate about the use of the death penalty in the country.

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

-urging the President to commute the death sentence of Zulfikar Bin Mustaffah;

- expressing sympathy for the victims of crime, but pointing out that if the execution is carried out, it will only cause more suffering for the relatives of Zulfikar Bin Mustaffah;
- 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 drug trafficking, but emphasizing that there is no proof that the death penalty deters would-be traffickers more effectively than other punishments and appealing to the authorities to find a more humane way to tackle this crime.

APPEALS TO:

The President

His Excellency S R Nathan
Office of the President
Istana, Orchard Road
Republic of Singapore 0922

Telegrams: President S R Nathan, Singapore

Faxes:+ 65 738 4673

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

Telegrams:Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Singapore

Faxes:+ 65 732 4627

Minister of Law

Professor Shanmugham Jayakumar
Ministry of Law
250 North Bridge Road
07-00 Raffles City Tower
Republic of Singapore 179101

Telegrams:FOREIGN RS 21242, RS21 136, RS20358

Faxes:+ 65 332 8842

e-mail: supmlaw@cs.gov.sg

Minister of Home Affairs

Wong Kan Seng
Ministry of Home Affairs
Phoenix Park
Tanglin Road
Republic of Singapore 247904

Faxes:+ 65 734 4420

Telegrams:Minister of Home Affairs, Singapore

and to diplomatic representatives of Singapore accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.