

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Singapore: Amnesty International Deplores Execution of Kho Jabing

Amnesty International strongly condemns the sudden execution of Kho Jabing, undertaken with shameful haste today. The rushed execution, that occurred mere hours after his final appeal was rejected, marked a cruel and inhuman end to Kho Jabing's life after a six year legal battle in the courts.

Kho Jabing, a Malaysian national, was executed at 3.30pm on 20 May 2016. Kho Jabing and a co-defendant were convicted of murder on 30 July 2010 and both were sentenced to the mandatory death penalty. However, after the 2012 review of the mandatory death penalty laws, on 14 August 2013, the High Court found the murder to be non-intentional and resented Kho Jabing to life imprisonment and 24 strokes of the cane. On 14 January 2015, the Court of Appeal re-imposed the death penalty on Kho Jabing in a three-to-two split decision.

An appeal admitted on 3 November 2015, three days before his scheduled execution, was dismissed on 5 April 2016. Another last minute application by his lawyers that was granted on 19 May 2016, resulted in a temporary stay of execution. On the morning of 20 May 2016, Kho Jabing appeared in Court, hoping for a chance of reprieve. However, he was executed not long after this appeal was dismissed.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature of the crime. The taking of another's life by execution is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment - and the risk of executing an innocent person can never be eliminated as long as the death penalty is kept on the law books. Such practices violate the right to life, a fundamental right of every human being. Furthermore, under international law and standards the use of the death penalty must be restricted to the "most serious crimes" which has been interpreted to mean intentional killing.

In this instance, Amnesty International also has strong concerns around the basis on which the death sentence of Kho Jabing was re-imposed, after a split decision in the courts. In modern day Singapore, the answer to crime does not lie within

the hangman's noose. Moreover, there is no evidence that the death penalty is more of a deterrent to crime than life imprisonment.

The execution of Kho Jabing marks a huge step backwards for Singapore which has reduced the implementation of the death penalty in recent years. Following the official moratorium on executions established in Singapore from 2012 to 2013, at least 13 people have had their death sentences reviewed and eventually commuted and new sentencing discretion has resulted in several individuals being spared the gallows.

We urge the authorities of Singapore to immediately halt all executions and commute all death sentences, as first steps towards the full abolition of the death penalty.