

URGENT ACTION

YOUNG MAN AT RISK OF EXECUTION IN SINGAPORE

Yong Vui Kong, a young Malaysian man on death row in Singapore, was fortunately not executed as expected in 2011. On 15 January, friends and activists risked arrest by publicly gathering to mark his upcoming birthday. The election of Singapore's new President provides a fresh opportunity to call for Yong Vui Kong's life to be saved.

On 15 January 2012, friends and supporters of **Yong Vui Kong** gathered at the Speakers' Corner at Hong Lim Park in Singapore to celebrate in advance his 24th birthday. Public gatherings of activists and human rights defenders are rare in Singapore, where freedom of peaceful assembly is restricted and freedom of expression limited. Despite this, around 70 people gathered that Sunday to mark Yong Vui Kong's birthday and to continue to appeal for his life to be spared.

Yong Vui Kong has only one wish for his 24th birthday: a second chance in life after spending more than half of his adult life in death row. In July 2011, a few months after Singapore's Court of Appeal rejected another appeal against Yong's sentence, he wrote:

"For me, if tomorrow is my last night, I do not have a choice either. I just have to face the fact. After all, I was the one who made a mistake and I have repented. You ask me if I would feel frightened, I think I may not be, because I am starting to become familiar with how it feels to face death, don't forget that in this short four years, I have brushed past death many times. I have "died" many times....

"I am also grateful that members of society are willing to forgive me, being able to live until today is my greatest fortune."

Yong's lawyer appealed against his death sentence by challenging the constitutionality of the mandatory death penalty for drug trafficking and seeking judicial review of the clemency process. The appeals were rejected in April 2011, clearing the way for Yong's execution. His last hope is clemency from the President of Singapore, who can grant this only on the advice from the Cabinet. Clemency for a death sentence in Singapore has reportedly been granted only six times since independence in 1965.

Please write immediately in English, Mandarin or your own language:

- Stop the execution of Yong Vui Kong;
- Suspend all executions and the imposition of new death sentences as a step towards total abolition of the death penalty;
- Revoke legislation establishing mandatory death sentences.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 February 2012 TO:

President of Singapore
His Excellency Dr. Tony Tan Keng Yam
Office of the President
Orchard Road, Singapore 238823
Email:
istana_general_office@istana.gov.sg
Or fill-in the comment form at the
President's office via:

<http://www.istana.gov.sg/content/istana/feedback.html>
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

The Online Citizen
A Community of Singaporeans
(an alternative news source for
Singapore)
Email: theonlinecitizen@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the sixth update of UA 296/09. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA36/002/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Under Singapore's drug laws, a defendant is automatically presumed guilty of drug trafficking in cases where possession of heroin exceeds two grams. This provision violates the defendant's right to be presumed innocent of a crime until proven guilty.

Singaporean law also makes the death penalty mandatory for trafficking more than 30 grams of heroin. In 2007, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions Philip Alston said, "Singapore's decision to make the death penalty mandatory keeps judges from considering all of the factors relevant to determining whether a death sentence would be permissible in a capital case."

Name: Yong Vui Kong

Gender m/f: male

Further information on UA: 296/09 Index: ASA 36/001/2012 Issue Date: 16 January 2012