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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL Press release

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Singapore's conviction of author Alan Shadrake for contempt of court will further stifle freedom of expression and legitimate criticism of the Singaporean judiciary, Amnesty International said today.

Shadrake, a 75 year-old British citizen based in Malaysia, was convicted today for contempt of court due to his book 'Once a Jolly Hangman: Singapore Justice in the Dock' "scandalizing the judiciary" according to the judgement, which found that the book alleges "grave misconduct on the part of the courts."

Shadrake faces imprisonment, a fine, or both. He is scheduled to be sentenced next Tuesday 9 November.

"This judgement creates a chilling effect on freedom of speech, for Singaporeans and foreigners alike," said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International's Director for the Asia-Pacific.

Alan Shadrake's book accuses Singapore's courts of bowing to pressure from the government and the wealthy.

"Singapore's criminal prosecution of Shadrake only underscores the country's poor record of respect for freedom of expression," said Sam Zarifi.

Shadrake is also being prosecuted under Singapore's criminal defamation laws, which have in the past been used to silence critics of the government.

The UN special rapporteur on freedom of expression has called on all countries to abolish criminal defamation laws, on the grounds that civil defamation laws already provide adequate protection.

Shadrake was arrested in Singapore in July 2010 after launching his book on the history of the

Singaporean death penalty.