

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **UN: Singapore rejects calls to end death penalty and caning**

#### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Singapore***

At the first Universal Periodic Review of Singapore's overall human rights record, the Singapore government rejected recommendations to end its use of mandatory death sentences, and to impose a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to abolition.<sup>1</sup>

Amnesty International regrets Singapore's refusal to adopt these key recommendations made by several states at the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of Singapore.

Singapore imposes the mandatory death penalty on drug-trafficking suspects, and violates international fair trial standards by denying them the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. In 2006, the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions stated that the Singapore law making the death penalty mandatory for drug-related offences is inconsistent with international human rights norms.<sup>2</sup>

Amnesty International also regrets that Singapore rejected recommendations regarding judicial caning, a practice which constitutes torture or other ill-treatment.<sup>3</sup> Singapore's use of this punishment is contrary to the global ban on torture.

Singapore's Internal Security Act allows the authorities to detain individuals indefinitely, without charge or trial. Amnesty International is disappointed that Singapore failed to support recommendations regarding preventive detention.<sup>4</sup> It urges Singapore to repeal the Internal Security Act, and to ensure that all criminal proceedings meet international fair-trial standards.

Amnesty International welcomes Singapore's support of recommendations to protect the rights of migrant workers, who account for a third of the country's labour force.<sup>5</sup> While recent measures offer better protection to migrants, many migrant workers still face difficulty in seeking redress for abuses by employers and labour agents. Furthermore, the labour laws continue to exclude migrant domestic workers from basic labour protections, including maximum work hours and weekly rest days.<sup>6</sup>

Amnesty International welcomes Singapore's intention to consider accession to the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).<sup>7</sup> It takes this opportunity to urge Singapore to ratify other core human rights instruments, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/18/11, recommendations 97.1 (France), 97.2 (Switzerland), 97.3 (Czech Republic), 97.4 (Canada), 97.5 (United Kingdom), 97.6 (Slovenia).

<sup>2</sup> HR/07/9, 25 January 2007, "UN Rights Expert Calls on Singapore not to Carry Out Execution". Available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=1920&LangID=E>, accessed 21 September 2011.

<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/18/11, recommendations 97.7 (Czech Republic, France), 97.8 (Djibouti).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., recommendations 97.10 (Slovenia), 97.11 (Canada).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., recommendations 94.13 (Brunei Darussalam), 94.14 (India), 94.15 (Nepal), 94.16 (the Philippines), 94.17 (Malaysia).

<sup>6</sup> Employment Act (Cap 91), section 2(b).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., recommendations 96.2 (Morocco, Swaziland, India), 96.3 (Sudan), 96.4 (Botswana, Trinidad and Tobago), 96.5 (Oman, Afghanistan), 96.8 (Slovenia), 96.10 (Czech Republic), 96.11 (Poland), 96.13 (United Kingdom), 96.17 (Kazakhstan).

Amnesty International encourages Singapore to regularly brief this Council on its follow-up to the UPR recommendations.

**Background**

Prior to the UN Human Rights Council's adoption of the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review on 22 September 2011, Amnesty International delivered an oral statement. Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on Singapore: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA36/002/2010/en>

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