ORAL STATEMENT
Item 6:
Consideration of UPR reports: Singapore

UN Human Rights Council
48th session
13 September – 8 October 2021

Madame President,

Amnesty International welcomes Singapore's participation in its 3rd UPR cycle, however, is concerned about its low acceptance of recommendations on key issues.[1]

The death penalty in Singapore continues to be retained as the mandatory punishment for several offences, including drug trafficking and murder. While Amnesty International notes Singapore's acceptance of the recommendation to keep the use of the death penalty under review,[2] it regrets its rejection of 19 out of 23 others.[3] The reason given is that the death penalty is reserved for the most serious crimes. Drug related offences fail to meet the threshold of "most serious crimes" as defined under international human rights law and standards.

Pending full abolition, Amnesty International calls on the Singapore government to establish a moratorium on all executions and bring legislation that allows for the use of the death penalty in line with international human rights law and standards, including by removing the mandatory death penalty and restricting the scope of this punishment to intentional killing as critical first steps.

Madame President,

Political activists, human rights defenders and government critics continue to face targeted prosecution under repressive laws for the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

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[1] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review–Singapore Addendum,* A/HRC/48/16/Add.1, 10 September 2021

[2] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review–Singapore,* A/HRC/48/16, 22 July 2021, recommendation 59.126 (Timor-Leste)

[3] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review–Singapore,* A/HRC/48/16, 22 July 2021, recommendations 59.121 (Paraguay), 59.122 (Romania), 59.123 (Austria), 59.124 (Sweden), 59.125 (Switzerland), 59.128 (Iceland, Canada, Luxembourg, New Zealand). 59.130 (North Macedonia). 59.131 (Australia), 59.132 (Portugal, Costa Rica, South Africa, Uruguay, Spain , Malawi, Italy, Czechia, Poland, Slovenia , FInland, Albania, Ukraine, Norway, Lithuania, Ukraine, Norway, Netherlands), 59.133 (Brazil), 59.134 (Costa Rica), 59.135 (Chile), 59.136 (Cyprus), 59.137 (France), 59.138 (Germany), 59.139 (Ireland), 59.140 (Latvia), 59.141 (Zambia), 59.142 (Norway)

Amnesty International regrets Singapore's rejection of most recommendations[4] relating to these rights. The reasons given are that Singapore's laws and policies comply with international human rights law and that restrictions of these rights are necessary to "preserve a harmonious society." This is not a legitimate reason to derogate from these rights. Amnesty International has repeatedly called for the abolition or amendment of restrictive laws including the Sedition Act, Administration of Justice Act, POFMA, and the Public Order Act. Right now, Singapore is poised to adopt the Foreign Interference (Countermeasures) Bill that would give the government the freedom to label any media outlet as a 'foreign agent' and impose harsh sentences simply for the intent to publish. We urge it to refrain from doing so.

Amnesty International regrets Singapore's rejection of recommendations to ratify remaining core human rights treaties and establish an independent national human rights institution. We urge the government to reconsider its position and implement these recommendations before its next review.

Thank you.

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[4] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review–Singapore,* A/HRC/48/16, 22 July 2021, recommendations 59.161 (Poland), 59.163 (Slovakia), 59.164 (Switzerland), 59.165 (United States of America), 59.167(Belgium), 59.169 (Iceland), 59.172 (Netherlands). 59.174 (Bahamas), 59.175 (Canada), 59.176 (Denmark), 59.177 (Germany), 59.178 (Ireland) 59.179 (Norway), 59.180 (Portugal, Mexico) and 59.181 (Malawi)