



ADPAN NEWSLETTER NO. 3/2012 July-August 2012

This is the third edition this year of the ADPAN Newsletter covering July and August 2012. It provides links to significant death penalty news stories from across the Asia Pacific region, and notes any public actions undertaken by ADPAN.

The Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN) is an independent, impartial network of individuals, NGOs, lawyers, human rights defenders and activists from 26 countries committed to working for an end to the death penalty in their own countries and across the Asia Pacific region.

Please distribute the ADPAN Newsletter widely, pass on to your networks, place online and use in any campaigning work against the death penalty.

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GOOD NEWS

BANGLADESH

HC acquits 12 death row convicts

On 14 August, Assistant Attorney General Aminur Rahman Chowdury announced that the High Court in Dhaka had acquitted 12 prisoners on death row.

14/08/2012 *BD News 24*

<http://www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=230333&cid=2>

INDIA

Indian President defends record death row pardons

India's first female President Prathiba Patil has been criticised in the media for granting clemency to 35 death row inmates during her 5 year term. On 25 June, the office of President Patil issued a statement: "The President is discharging a constitutional obligation and not doling out generosity" and "she took well considered decisions". Presidential spokesperson Archana Datta also said "By the exercise of the power of pardon, the President does not amend, modify or substitute the judicial decisions. On receiving clemency, the death sentence gets commuted to imprisonment for the remainder of their natural lives".

India has not executed anyone since 2004.

26/07/2012 *Gulf Times, NY Daily News*

<http://www.gulf->

times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=515918&version=1&template_id=40&parent_id=22

<http://india.nydailynews.com/newsarticle/4fe99777b1e35d5904000018/indian-president-defends-record-death-row-pardons>

After six years on death row, spared for being a juvenile

On 6 July, a court in Maharashtra passed an order declaring Ankush Maruti Shinde to have been a juvenile at the time of his alleged offence. Shinde has spent the last 9 years on death row. His counsel had failed to point out that he was less than 18 years of age in the Trial, High and Supreme Courts. Human Rights Advocate Vijay Hiremath took on Shinde's case, and appealed based on school records stating Shinde's date of birth. The maximum sentence for juveniles is three years imprisonment. Shinde is still imprisoned at Nagpur Central Prison.

20/08/2012 *Times of India, The Hindu*

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/after-six-years-on-death-row-spared-for0-being-a-juvenile/articleshow/15577973.cms>

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article3804480.ece>

INDONESIA / SINGAPORE

Indonesian Maid in Singapore spared execution

The Indonesian embassy in Singapore announced that prosecutors have dropped a demand for the death sentence in the case of Nurhayati, an Indonesian migrant worker from West Java. Nurhayati is accused of neglect leading to the death of a child. The embassy, working alongside the Indonesian Task Force on Migrant Workers, states that the accused was a minor at the time of the incident, and are arguing that the case should be one of culpable homicide, which has a maximum sentence of 10 years in jail. There are currently hundreds of Indonesians facing the death penalty in several countries.

12/07/2012 The Jakarta Globe

<http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/lawandorder/update-indonesian-maid-in-singapore-spared-execution/530057>

MALAYSIA

Proposal to give judges discretion on death sentence welcomed

The Malaysian Attorney General announced he is considering removing the mandatory death sentence for so called “drug mules”, and giving judges discretionary sentencing powers in such cases. This would require amendments to the 1952 Dangerous Drugs Act. The announcement was welcomed by the Malaysian Bar, which in March had passed a resolution calling for the death penalty to be abolished.

This statement came only days after Singapore announced its plans to ease the laws on mandatory death sentences for certain drug offences.

14/07/2012 The Malaysian Insider, The Malaysian Mirror

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/malaysia-weighs-sparing-drug-mules-the-gallows/>
<http://www.malaysianmirror.com/media-buzz-detail/136-letters-to-the-editor/58326-proposal-to-give-judges-discretion-on-death-sentence-welcomed>

Sultan grants pardon to death row 5

On 19 July, on the fourth day of Ramadan, the Johar Pardons Board convened for the first time in 15 years. The board, chaired by Sultan Ibrahim, released eight prisoners, including 2 who had served more than 30 years on death row. Four other death row prisoners had their punishments commuted to life imprisonment.

19/07/2012 Asia One, The Star

<http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Malaysia/Story/A1Story20120719-360063.html>
<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/7/22/nation/20120722080409&sec=nation>

Indians' death sentence overturned by Malaysian Court

On 7 August, the Appeals court in Kuala Lumpur overturned the death sentences of Ramjali Sayed Ibrahim and Sayed Ibrahim Mydeen Batcha, setting aside a High Court decision from October 2010 which had found them guilty of drug trafficking. The Appeals Court stated that the convictions had not been safe as many aspects of the evidence had not been considered by the High Court judge.

07/08/2012 Hindustan Times, Zee News

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/RestOfAsia/Malaysian-court-overturns-Indians-death-sentence/Article1-909843.aspx>
http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/indians-death-sentence-overturned-by-malaysia_792331.html

MYANMAR

Myanmar death row bombing convict pardoned

On 3 August, Phyo Wai Aung was granted a presidential pardon. Phyo Wai Aung was sentenced to death in May for alleged involvement in the Yangon bombings which killed 10 people. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners claim that Aung was tortured, denied his rights whilst in detention, and denied the right to fair trial. He is currently being treated for liver cancer, and is said to be too ill to leave the hospital. Phyo Wai Aung's lawyer stated that they continue to appeal the case, as Phyo Wai Aung "is not guilty and did not commit any crime".

04/08/2012 Bangkok Post

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/305889/myanmar-death-row-bombing-convict-pardoned-police>
<http://www.dvb.no/news/freed-rangoon-bomber-appeals-guilty-verdict/23312>

PAKISTAN

PPP stops execution of death penalty in Sindh

On 25 July, Sindh Law and Prisons Minister Ayaz Soomro announced that there would be no executions in Sindh Province until the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) complete its term in March 2013. Soomro also stated that the Sindh province had suggested to President Asif Ali Zardari that the death penalty should be replaced with life imprisonment. This announcement followed a recent European Union visit to Islamabad by Jean Lambert calling for reform of the death penalty.

26/07/2012 The Tribune

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/412956/ppp-stops-execution-of-death-penalty-in-sindh>

Presidency considers commuting death sentence to life imprisonment

Former Federal Minister for Human Rights Ansar Burney has repeatedly petitioned President Zardari to commute all death sentences to life imprisonment noting that a large number of prisoners were either innocent or had spent several decades on death row. Most recently in July, Burney issued a notice requesting that the Ministry of Law, the Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, the Prime Minister's Secretariat and the Chief Secretaries of all provinces give their view on the petitions and the possibility of commuting all death sentences. There are currently over 7500 prisoners on death row in Pakistan.

12/08/2012 Tribune, One Pakistan

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/421141/presidency-considers-commuting-death-sentences-to-life-imprisonment/>
<http://pakistan.onepakistan.com/news/city/islamabad/117068-ansar-burney-again-urges-president-to-commute-all-death-sentences-into-life.html>

SINGAPORE

Singapore complete review of death penalty

On 9 July, Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean announced the government's plans to change the law relating to the mandatory death penalty. Although mandatory death sentences will apply for alleged drug traffickers in most circumstances, Mr Teo explained that there are two specific, tightly defined circumstances when the death penalty will be at the discretion of the court.

Firstly, the accused must have only acted as a courier and not had any other part in the supply or distribution of drugs, and secondly he must either have cooperated with the Central Narcotics Bureau in a substantive way, or have a mental disability which substantially impairs his appreciation of the gravity of his act.

09/07/2012 Channel News Asia, Reuters

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/1212485/1/html>
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/09/us-singapore-death-idUSBRE8680HV20120709>

Death penalty overturned for man who killed girlfriend

On 15 August, the Court of Appeal overturned 25 year old Pathip Selvn Sugumarans death sentence, reducing the conviction to culpable homicide. Sugumaran was convicted in 2010 of murdering his girlfriend Jeevitha Panippan.

16/08/2012 *Today Online*

<http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/edc120816-0000041/death-penalty-overturned-for-a-man-who-killed-girlfriend>

THAILAND

Death penalty abolished for young offenders

On 6 July, Thailand withdrew their interpretative declarations to Article 6(5) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Thailand has amended its domestic laws to comply with the provisions of these Articles, abolishing the death penalty for persons under the age of 18. Persons under 18 can no longer be sentenced to life imprisonment, as this sentence will automatically be reduced to 50 years imprisonment.

30/08/2012 *Thailand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangkok Post*

<http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/media-center/14/27088-Thailand-withdraws-its-interpretative-declarations.html>
<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/309928/deat-penalty-abolished-for-young-offender>

Rights dept presses for end of death penalty

On July 18, Pithaya Jimawat, Director General of The Rights and Liberties Protection Department stated that his department will continue to put pressure on the government to work towards the abolition of the death penalty.

18/07/2012 *Nation Multimedia*

<http://nationmultimedia.com/politics/Rights-dept-presses-for-end-of-death-peanlty-30186486.html>

TAIWAN

Hsichih Trio acquitted as 20 year murder case finally closed.

On 31 August, the High Court quashed the death sentences of Su Chien-ho, Liu Bing-lang and Chuang Lin-hsun. The three were accused of a murder in Taipei in 1991, and were first sentenced to death in 1992. This is the third time the Hsichih Trio have been acquitted by the High Court. The case became the focus of a global human rights campaign, with civil society groups, including the Taiwan Alliance to end the Death Penalty (TAEDP) and Amnesty International¹ campaigning for their acquittal and for abolition of the death penalty in Taiwan. In accordance with the Criminal Speedy Trial Act, this verdict is final as no more appeals are allowed.

In 2010 Taiwan ended a 5 year moratorium on the death penalty by executing 4 death row prisoners.

31/08/2012 *Want Chine Times, Inquirer*

<http://wantchinatimes.com/news-sublass-cnt.aspx?id=20120831000133&cid=1103>
<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/261438/taiwan-quashes-convictions-in-21-year-old-murder-case>

In its statement made on 10 September, ADPAN welcomed the decision and urged the Taiwan government to place a moratorium on all executions, and to work toward the total abolition of the death penalty for all crimes.

10/09/2012 *ADPAN.net*

<http://adpan.net/2012/09/10/taiwan-the-hsichih-trio-are-freed/>

¹ ADPAN members

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

CHINA

Killer sentenced to death penalty

On 26 July, a court in Chinas Zhejiang province sentenced a man to death for alleged murder. Yi Tingman allegedly ran over the victim, Gan, with his motor tricycle. The court claimed that instead of helping the victim, Yi removed Gan from the scene of the accident and later killed him. In May earlier this year, Yi had pleaded for a lighter sentence.

27/12/2012 China Daily

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/27/content_15625241.htm

Serial killer Zhang Yongming given death sentence for killing 11 people

On 28 July, alleged serial killer Zhang Yongming was sentenced to death by a court in Yunnan. Zhang was convicted of murder in 1979 but was released after his sentence was reduced. Between 2008 and 2012 Zhang allegedly killed 11 people, all boys and young men.

28/07/2012 Global Post, Gokunming

<http://globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/weird-wide-web/china-serial-killer-zhang-yongming-given-death-sentence-k>

http://gokunming.com/en/blog/item/2758/yunnan_serial_killer_gets_death_penalty

China's Gu Kailai gets suspended death sentence

On 20 August, Hefei Intermediate People's Court sentenced Gu Kailai, wife of former politician Bo Xilai, to a two year suspended death sentence. Provided that Gu does not commit further offences in the next two years, this type of sentencing is likely to be commuted to life imprisonment. On 9 August Gu Kailail confessed to poisoning businessman Neil Heywood.

The suspended death sentence has caused considerable debate on Chinas Weibo, a microblog similar to Twitter. Over a million posts could be seen following the sentence, many users claiming that Gu Kalai was given a more lenient sentence due to her being married to a former political leader.

20/08/2012 Hindustan Times, Gulf News

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/China/heywood-murder-china-s-gu-kalai-gets-suspended-death-sentence/article1-916441.aspx>

<http://gulfnnews.com/news/world/other-world/china-web-users-say-sentence-too-light-1.1064020>

INDIA

Seven of a family get death penalty for honour killing

On 30 July, a court in Badaun sentenced seven members of a family to death for killing two people in May 2006. The police had found the victims, both in their early twenties, to have been victims of "honour killings", as the family of the female victim did not approve of their relationship.

31/07/2012 Express India, Times of India

<http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/seven-of-a-family-get-death-penalty-for-honour-killing/981793/>

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-07-30/lucknow/32941010_1_anita-faridpur-village-honour

Parliamentary panel against death penalty for pirates

The Standing Committee on External Affairs has recommended that the Indian Parliament review the Piracy Bill 2012 as the current maximum penalty for the crime of piracy causing loss of life is the death sentence. The Committee stated that foreign government had refused to extradite those accused of piracy to India due to the risk of the accused being sentenced to death.

14/08/2012 *Indian Express, Zee News*

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/parliamentary-panel-okays-piracy-bill-wants-death-penalty-review/990963>

http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/par-panel-against-death-sentence-for-pirates_793668.html

Former judges call for commutation of death penalty

Fourteen former Supreme and High Court judges have appealed to President Pranab Mukherjee asking that the death sentence of 8 men be commuted to life. In India, the death penalty should only be given in the “rarest of rare” cases, taking into consideration both the crime and the defendant. However, in 1996 a judgement was passed stating that “it is the nature and the gravity of the crime” which is to be considered, not the circumstances of the criminal. This judgement was followed in 13 death penalty cases, 5 of which have already been commuted.

19/08/2012 *Times of India, The Hindu*

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article3804480.ece>

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-08-19/India/33272716_1_sc-judge-death-penalty-sc-and-hcs

Kasab will hang, Supreme Court says

On 29 August, the Supreme Court in New Delhi upheld the death sentence of Mohammad Ajmal Amir Qasab, a 25 year old Pakistani man accused of taking part in terror attacks in Mumbai in 2008. India has not executed a death row prisoner since 2004 and following a Supreme Court ruling in 1983 the death penalty should only be carried out in the “rarest of rare” cases. Supreme Court lawyer Nitya Ramakrishnan told Radio Australia “[the death penalty] is an extreme measure and a fundamental revulsion against society... Death penalty is the exception and life imprisonment is the rule”.

29/08/2012 *ABC, NY Daily News*

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-08-31/an-india-death-row-debate-ignited/4237374>

<http://india.nydailynews.com/politics/article/81afb67305a4002b64f5854a93038e93/kasab-will-hang-supreme-court-says>

INDONESIA / AUSTRALIA

Sukumaran last hope to avoid firing squad

Myaran Sukumaran, one of two of the so called Bali Nine members still facing the death penalty for drug smuggling, has appealed for clemency from the Indonesian President. His clemency appeal includes statements from prison guards at Keobokan jail where he is currently on death row, as well as a personal statement from Sukumaran in which he states the he has “repented... and has been working to better himself while in prison”.

09/07/2012 *SMH News, The Bali Times*

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/sukumaran-last-hope-to-avoid-firing-squad-20120709-21rz7.html>

<http://www.thebalitimes.com/2012/07/09/sukumaran-of-bali-nine-appeals-for-clemency/>

JAPAN

Japan's death terms rise 4-fold over 20 years.

On 23 July, the Legal Training and Research Institute released a report covering the years 1946-2009 on death sentences and other legal trends prior to the introduction of the lay judge system in May 2009. The researchers provided guidelines for lay judges suggesting they follow historical sentencing trends in cases where the accused could be given the death sentence. They also called for tolerance by the lay judges depending on the severity of sentences in cases of less serious crimes and noted that the overall number of crimes had been falling.

25/07/2012 Asia One, Japan Times

<http://www.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20120725-361192.html>

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20120725a2.html>

Japan hangs two death row inmates

On 3 August, Japanese Justice Minister Makoto Taki authorised the executions of Junya Hattori, 40 and Kyozo Matsumura, 31, the first executions since he was appointed in June. These executions follow three in May earlier this year, which ended an almost two year moratorium on the death penalty in Japan. Taki stated "As I said when I assumed the post, unless there is any uncertainty concerning a conviction, a justice minister should respect the trial process and the decision of the court".

03/08/2012 The Star, Japan Times

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=%2F2012%2F8%2F3%2Freutersworld%2F1208031154-japan-hangs-two-deathrow-inmates&sec=reutersworld>

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20120803x1.html>

On 3 August ADPAN released a News Flash condemning these two executions, calling upon the Japanese government to place an immediate moratorium on the death penalty, to commute all death sentences and to work toward full abolition of the death penalty for all crimes.

03/08/2012 ADPAN

<http://www.adpan.net/2012/08/03/adpan-newsflash-japan/>

Japan studying whether to retire the noose for executions

On 7 August, Justice Minister Makoto Taki announced that he was gathering information on whether to change Japan's method of execution from hanging to lethal injection. Hanging has been used in Japan since 1873, but has been criticized as cruel, inhumane and causing unnecessary suffering.

A former Supreme Court prosecutor, Takeshi Tsuchimoto, said, "The entire nation must discuss the issue [of the death penalty] as long as citizens are legally responsible for being involved in the death penalty under the lay judge system...The people must also learn the reality of the death penalty".

13/08/2012 House of Japan, The Asahi Shimbun

<http://www.houseofjapan.com/local/japan-justice-minister-cautious-about-executions>

http://ajw.asahi.com/article/behind_news/social_affairs/AJ201208130006

JAPAN / SOUTH KOREA

Sugiura: End Death Penalty in name of democracy

Following a visit to South Korea organized by the Japan Federation of Bar Associations, former Japanese Minister of Justice Sugiura said in Tokyo that abolishing the death penalty would represent a step toward becoming a “mature democratic nation”. He noted that South Korea would be abolishing the death penalty in the future, and that Japan would fall behind.

31/07/2012 Japan Times

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20120731f1.html>

MALDIVES

Cannot debate over not implementing death penalty: AG

On 23 July, Attorney General Aishath Azima Shakoor said her office was drafting the procedures required to implement the death penalty.

24/07/2012 Haveruu

<http://www.haveruu.com.mv/news/43623>

MYANMAR

Death for 13 over murder in Thanlyin

13 people from the Thaketa and Thanlyin townships were sentenced to death by the Southern District Court. Seven of the thirteen were sentenced for the murder of restaurant owner Aung Chan Tha Ward, who was killed in his restaurant in July last year. Two of the men were found guilty of conspiring to remove the body, and others were convicted of threatening the victim six days prior to his death.

15/07/2012 Myanmar Times

<http://www.mmtimes.com/2012/news/634/news63412.html>

NEPAL / UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Mother of Sharjah killer in blood money plea to save his life

The Nepalese mother of Durga Bahadur Sunar on death row in Dubai for an alleged murder which took place in 2009 has appealed to her government in Nepal to help her raise the 2 million Nepalese rupees requested by the victim’s family in “blood money”. The victim’s family have said that they do not want Durga to be executed, and that if the Nepalese Government does not assist with raising the funds, they will ultimately forgive him, and Durga would be spared the death sentence.

24/08/2012 The National, Bikyamasr

<http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/courts/mother-of-sharjah-killer-in-blood-money-plea-to-save-his-life>
<http://www.bikyamasr.com/75818/nepal-mother-to-uae-to-save-son-facing-execution/>

PAKISTAN

Capital Punishment for three convicts on hold

Following a presidential order, three death row prisoners have had their executions deferred until 30 September. Atullah, Azam Khan and Behram Khan were due to be hanged on 17 and 18 July. Pakistan has not carried out a death sentence since 2008. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)² expressed concern that the death penalty remains on the statute books for over two dozen offences and that courts continue to pass death sentences.

06/07/2012 *Gulf News, The Express Tribune*

<http://gulfnews.com/news/world/pakistan/capital-punishment-for-three-convicts-on-hold-1.1045165>
<http://tribune.com.pk/story/403684/death-sentence-atc-postpones-three-executions-till-sept-30/>

Pakistani girl accused of Quran burning could face the death penalty

On 16 August, 14 year old Christian girl Rimsha Masih was accused of burning a copy of the Koran, and remained in police custody for 14 days. The alleged act would be in violation of Pakistan's strict blasphemy laws, and potentially punishable by death. Although senior government officials and police officials have stated that the accusations are unfounded and predicted that the case will shortly be dropped, it has caused a highly published debate amongst the Muslim community of Islamabad and the minority Christian community, and has received extensive international attention. On 2 September, police official Munir Hussain stated that a cleric had been taken into custody following witness reports that he had planted torn pages of the Quran in Rimsha Masih's bag.

Although Pakistan has never executed anyone for the crime of blasphemy, those accused of the crime have reported feeling threatened, sometimes being forced to leave Pakistan. Between 1986 and 2011, 1,060 individuals were charged with blasphemy; 46 of those individuals were killed while awaiting trial or after being acquitted.

20/08/2012 *The Guardian, New York Times, Reuters*

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/19/pakistan-christian-tensions-quran-burning-allegations>
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/21/world/asia/christian-girls-blasphemy-arrest-incites-a-furor-in-pakistan.html>
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/02/us-pakistan-blasphemy-girl-idUSBRE88101320120902>

Death penalty remains hurdle to EU market access

Following a visit to Pakistan by a European Union (EU) delegation, Pakistan has been cautioned by the EU not to lift the current de facto moratorium on the death penalty. Pakistan has been vying for the status of Generalised System for Preferences (GSP), a system which allows developing countries to export duty-free products to EU members. The system is however seen by the EU not as a trading instrument but also one dependent on basic human rights standards.

19/07/2012 *Express Tribune, One Pakistan*

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/410308/death-penalty-remains-hurdle-to-eu-market-access/>
<http://pakistan.onepakistan.com/news/pakistan/120518-eu-wants-pakistan-to-end-death-penalty-to-qualify-for-gsp-plus-scheme.html>

² ADPAN members

PAKISTAN / INDIA

Indian on death-row: Citing trial flaws, Sarabjit pleads for release

The lawyer in the case of death row prisoner Sarabjit Singh, is appealing for the commutation of his client's death sentence for his involvement in a string of bombings, citing unfair trial concerns and a case of mistaken identity. Sarabjit Singh's lawyer states that Sarabjit Singh, a Pakistani national, was mistaken for Manjit Singh, an Indian national and never given the benefit of doubt and was forced to confess on state television .

07/07/2012 *The Tribune, Indolink*

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/404882/indian-on-death-row-citing-flaws-sarabjit-pleads-for-release/>
<http://indolink.com/displayArticleS.php?id=070712115225>

SINGAPORE

Archbishop hails changes to death penalty

In an article published in the Catholic News on 29 July, Archbishop Nicholas Chia welcomed the proposed changes to the mandatory death penalty law in cases of drugs as a "significant step in the right direction" and said that "society should be moving toward more humane ways of restoring justice"

29/07/2012 *The Catholic News*

http://www.catholicnews.sg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7751&Itemid=78

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka conducting job interviews for hangmen

On 28 August the Department of Prisons began interviews for two positions as executioners. Sri Lanka has not executed anyone since 1976, and is considered by Amnesty International to be abolitionist in practice.

28/08/2012 *Reuters, Digital Journal*

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/08/28/oukoe-uk-srilanka-hangmen-idUKBRE87ROIS20120828>
<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/331747>

THAILAND

Death Penalty for 3 police officers for murder

On 30 July, three police officers were sentenced to death for allegedly murdering and attempting to conceal the death of a 17 year old man who had been accused of theft. Three other officers were sentenced to various jail terms for their involvement in the alleged offence. The Human Rights Lawyers Association, The Union for Civil Liberty³, the Campaign Committee for Human Rights and the Peace and Human Rights Resource Centre commends the efforts to end impunity amongst officers, but reiterates that the death penalty is a breach of fundamental human rights, and should be abolished in all circumstances.

10/08/2012 *Asian Human Rights Commission*

<http://www.humanrights.asia/news/forwarded-news/AHRC-FST-041-2012/?searchterm=death%20penalty>
<http://nationmultimedia.com/breakingnews/Rights-group-cheer-Thai-cop-convictions-in-extra-j-30187383.html>

³ ADPAN members

GLOBAL NEWS

BENIN

Benin accedes to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

On 5 July Benin became the 75th State Party to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. Benin can no longer allow for executions and must take all necessary measures to abolish the death penalty in law. There were reportedly 14 people under sentence of death in Benin at the end of 2011.

05/07/2012 Amnesty International, International Commission against the Death Penalty

http://www.amnesty.or.jp/en/news/2012/0713_3263.html

<http://www.icomdp.org/2012/07/republic-of-benin%E2%80%99s-accedes-to-the-second-optional-protocol-to-the-international-covenant-on-civil-and-political-rights/>

GAMBIA

Nine executed in Gambia, Amnesty says

Despite it being almost 30 years since Gambia performed its last official execution, on 25 August Amnesty International stated they had received “credible reports” that 9 people had been executed.

On 28 August, the Ministry of Interior confirmed that 9 convicts had been executed by firing squad on 26 August.

On 19 August President Jammeh said in a speech “By the middle of next month, all the death sentences would have been carried out to the letter”. There are currently 47 prisoners on death row in Gambia, all of which are now considered to be in imminent threat of execution. The executions have been condemned by among others the African Union, the UN, and the EU.

24/08/2012 BBC

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-19371622>

SOUTH AFRICA

Landmark ruling confirms South Africa cannot deport people at risk of death penalty

On 27 July, the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg issued a landmark ruling, rejecting the deportation of two people to Botswana where they face a real risk of the death penalty. “Today’s ruling by the Constitutional Court confirmed that a state that has abolished the death penalty may not hand over an individual to another State if there is a real risk of the death penalty being imposed” said Noel Kututwa, from Amnesty International.⁴

27/07/2012 Amnesty International, Hands Off Cain

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/landmark-ruling-confirms-south-africa-cannot-deport-people-risk-death-penalty-2012-07-27>

<http://www.handsoffcain.info/news/index.php?iddocumento=16308714>

UNITED NATIONS

⁴ ADPAN member

Un Secretary General calls on states to abolish death penalty

On 3 July, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called on all states to abolish the death penalty. He said “The taking of life is too absolute, too irreversible, for one human being to inflict on another, even when backed by legal process” and that “where the death penalty persists, conditions for those awaiting execution are often horrifying, leading to aggravated suffering”. Mr Ban also expressed concern that 32 States retain the death penalty for drug-related offences and against juvenile offenders.

The Secretary General referred to the 2007 UN General Assembly resolution calling for a worldwide moratorium on the death penalty.

03/07/2012 UN, Times of India

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42382&Cr=Human>

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/UN-chief-Ban-Ki-Moon-calls-for-end-of-death-penalty/articleshow/14658031.cms?>
