

PUBLIC

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Imminent execution

29 June 1999

SINGAPORE

Norishyam Mohamed Ali, 26, former lorry driver
Shaiful Edham Adam, 23, former commodities broker

The two men named above are scheduled to be hanged at dawn on 2 July 1999.

They were sentenced to death in August 1998, convicted of the murder of Iordanka Apostolova, a Bulgarian former beauty queen. She was reportedly killed after an argument with Shaiful Edham Adam over the delayed sale of a car, which she and Shaiful had bought as an investment. The judge presiding in the case stated that Shaiful had admitted to slashing Miss Apostolova's neck during a fight, and that Norishyam had confessed to holding her legs while Shaiful hit her. Shaiful Edham Adam has stated that Miss Apostolova's killing was unintentional.

Shaiful Edham Adam is married with a child. His wife has been imprisoned for six years for acting as an accomplice in this case. Norishyam Mohamed Ali lives with his parents.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The death penalty is an inherently unjust and arbitrary punishment, however heinous the crime for which it is imposed. Studies have shown that it is more likely to be imposed on those who are poorer, less educated and more vulnerable than average. The risk of error in applying the death penalty is inescapable, yet it is irrevocable. Furthermore, there is no convincing evidence that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other punishments.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The number of executions carried out in Singapore is believed to have increased sharply in recent years. Since 1994 more than 170 executions have been recorded in the city-state, which has a population of 3.4 million. At least 28 executions reported in 1998, Singapore is believed to have some of the highest numbers of executions per capita in the world. Most are believed to have been for drug-trafficking offences. There are fears, however, that the true number of executions may be significantly higher, as the authorities do not regularly publish relevant statistics. Presidential pardons have been granted to six people condemned to death. Execution is by hanging.

The death penalty is mandatory for drug-trafficking, which includes possession of more than 15 grams of heroin, 30 grams of morphine or 500 grams of cannabis, murder, treason and certain firearms offences. It is not known how many prisoners are currently under sentence of death.

A condemned person's family and lawyers are not allowed to be present at the execution.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams and faxes in English or your own language:

- urging the President to commute the sentences of Shaiful Edham Adam and Norishyam Mohamed Ali;
- expressing the view that if the executions are carried out, they will only cause more suffering for the families of the two young men concerned;
- expressing sympathy for the victims of heinous crime;
- expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty as a violation of one of the most fundamental of human rights - the right to life;
- recognizing the need to combat serious crime, but emphasizing that there is no proof that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other punishments.

APPEALS TO:

The President

His Excellency Ong Teng Cheong
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Republic of Singapore 0922

Telegrams: President Ong Teng Cheong, Singapore

Faxes: + 65 738 4673

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

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Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Singapore accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 July 1999.