

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 36/007/2001

25 September 2001

Further information on EXTRA 33/01 (ASA 36/002/2001, 30 May 2001) - Imminent Execution

SINGAPORE Zulfikar Bin Mustaffah, aged 32, unemployed

Zulfikar Bin Mustaffah is scheduled to be hanged on 28 September.

He was sentenced to death in November 2000 after he was found in possession of approximately 70g of heroin. A drug addict since the age of 14, he has spent most of his life in drug rehabilitation centres or in custody. All his appeals have been rejected.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty is mandatory in Singapore for drug trafficking, murder, treason and certain firearms offences. Anyone over the age of 18 found in possession of more than 15 grams of heroin, 30 grams of morphine or cocaine, or 500 grams of cannabis, is presumed to be trafficking in the drug, unless the contrary can be proved, and faces a mandatory death sentence. Persistent drug addicts who have been admitted more than twice to a drugs rehabilitation centre are treated as criminals who may be imprisoned for up to 13 years and caned. Despite these draconian anti-drugs laws, drug addiction continues to be a problem.

Out of 340 people executed in Singapore since 1991, 247 had been convicted of drug trafficking offences. Executions are by hanging and take place on Friday mornings at dawn. Families of convicts are normally only informed of the impending execution one week beforehand. There is no public debate about the use of the death penalty in the country.

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 inflicted. Studies have shown that it is more likely to be imposed on those who are poorer, less educated and more vulnerable than average. The death penalty is irrevocable, yet the risk of error in applying it is inescapable. While Amnesty International recognizes the need to combat drug trafficking, there is no convincing evidence that the death penalty deters would-be traffickers more effectively than other punishments.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- appealing to the President to reconsider his earlier decision to reject the clemency petition of Zulfikar Bin Mustaffah, and commute his death sentence;
- expressing your unconditional opposition to the death penalty as a violation of the most fundamental of human rights - the right to life;
- recognizing the need to combat drug trafficking, but emphasizing that there is no proof that the death penalty deters would-be traffickers more effectively than other punishments, and appealing to the authorities to find a more humane way of tackling this problem.

APPEALS TO:

The President
His Excellency S R Nathan
Office of the President
Istana, Orchard Road
Republic of Singapore 0922
Telegrams: President S R Nathan, Singapore

Faxes: + 65 738 4673

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

The Prime Minister

The Honourable Goh Chok Tong

Office of the Prime Minister

Istana Annexe,

Orchard Road

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Faxes: + 65 732 4627

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Professor Shanmugham Jayakumar

Ministry of Law

250 North Bridge Road

07-00 Raffles City Tower

Republic of Singapore 179101

Telegrams: FOREIGN RS 21242, RS21 136, RS20358

Faxes: + 65 332 8842

Minister of Home Affairs

Wong Kan Seng

Ministry of Home Affairs

Phoenix Park

Tanglin Road

Republic of Singapore 247904

Telegrams: Minister of Home Affairs, Singapore

Faxes: +65 734 4420

and 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 23 October 2001.