



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

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North-South Prize
of the Council of Europe

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**Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty:
Singaporean authorities carry out the execution of 34-year-old intellectually
disabled Malaysian national Nagaenthran Dharmalingam**

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) strongly condemns the carrying out of the execution of 34-year-old Malaysian national Nagaenthran Dharmalingam by Singaporean authorities on 27 April 2022. Reports reaching ICDP suggest that Mr Dharmalingam had an IQ of 69, a level that indicates an intellectual disability. Medical experts had, reportedly, concluded on several occasions that he had serious cognitive impairments, a concern dismissed by Singapore's Court of Appeals. In an appeal filed in December 2021, Mr Dharmalingam's mother had, reports suggest, said that he "got mixed up in criminal activity and sentenced to death because he has disabilities that affect his reasoning and judgment." In 2009, Nagaenthran Dharmalingam was caught crossing into Singapore from Malaysia with 43g (1.5oz) heroin strapped to his left thigh. Under Singapore's drug laws, those persons caught carrying more than 15g of heroin are subject to the death penalty, which is carried out by hanging. Mr Dharmalingam was first sentenced to death in 2010.

"The execution of Nagaenthran Dharmalingam on 27 April by Singaporean authorities despite experts expressing worrying concerns, on several occasions, of his intellectual disability and serious cognitive impairments puts the spotlight on Singapore as it appears to contravene the Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), a treaty ratified by the country in 2013. I join my fellow ICDP Commissioners in expressing grave disappointment that the authorities chose to dismiss these concerns and decided, instead, to carry out the irreversible act of the death penalty, which is an outdated, violent, inefficient policy that is at odds with the modern, caring, peaceful and efficient society that Singapore aims to be. It is the hope of ICDP Commissioners that Singaporean authorities will change course and consider the implementation of an official moratorium. The death penalty is an inhuman and cruel punishment that has been repeatedly discredited as a more effective deterrent than life imprisonment," said ICDP President Navi Pillay.

ICDP notes with deep concern that Singapore also reportedly intends to carry out, on 29 April, the execution of 36-year-old Datchinamurthy Kataiah, a Malaysian national convicted of drug charges. Moreover, at least three other men also convicted of drug charges, Roslan bin Bakar, Rosman bin Abdullah, and Pannir Selvam Pranthaman, currently face the death penalty.

Mr Dharmalingam's execution follows the resumption of executions on 30 March 2022, after two years, of Singaporean national Abdul Kahar Othman, also on drug-related offenses.

ICDP calls on the Singaporean government to consider other alternative measures that respects human dignity, humanity and tolerance which is the basis of modern justice systems, which can protect the public from crime without the irrevocable



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and cruel nature of the death penalty and the inevitable risk of executing an innocent person. An initial step could be the observation of a moratorium while carrying out steps to move away from the death penalty. By doing so, Singapore will join the vast majority of countries who have abolished the death penalty in law or in practice. These nations have recognized that state killing is wrong and fails to deter crime more effectively than other punishments.

Background

Composed of 24 Commissioners of high international standing following decades' long, highly respected experiences in public service and representing all regions of the world, ICDP acts with total independence under the guidance of President Navi Pillay.

The Commission promotes the abolition of capital punishment in law in states that observe a de facto moratorium on the use of the death penalty and promotes moratoriums on executions in states that retain capital punishment. ICDP works with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, governments, and nongovernmental organizations to advocate for worldwide abolition of the death penalty.

The work of ICDP is supported by a geographically diverse group of 23 MemberStates who are committed to the abolition of the death penalty. Its Secretariat is based in Madrid and is responsible for the day-to-day work of the Commission.



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