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against the Death Penalty

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(1934-2024)

Secretariat

Pl. Marqués de Salamanca 8

28006 Madrid, Spain

+00 34 91 3799458

info@icomdp.org



North-South Prize
of the Council of Europe

SARIA PREMIO

Rene Cassin

Madrid, 19 February 2025

ICDP 01/2025

Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Urgent call to authorities in Singapore to halt the imminent execution of Pannir Selvam Pranthaman

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission) urgently calls on the Singaporean authorities to halt the execution of Malaysian national 38-year-old Pannir Selvam Pranthaman, which has been scheduled for 20 February 2025.

Reports reaching ICDP suggest that 38-year-old Mr Pranthaman, who has been facing the death penalty since 2017, was sentenced to the mandatory death penalty after being found guilty of carrying for the purpose of selling 51.84 grammes of diamorphine (heroin); Singapore's Misuse of Drugs Act provides for the death penalty if the amount of diamorphine trafficked is more than 15 grammes.

ICDP notes with concern at reports suggesting that Mr Pranthaman's family, received only four days' notice about his scheduled execution.

"I join my fellow ICDP Commissioners in noting with deep concern that Singapore has escalated its pace of executions since October 2024, with at least nine people executed, including eight for drug-related offences. We would like to call on the authorities to not carry out the execution of Mr Pannir Selvam Pranthaman. Reports reaching ICDP indicate that the reliance on legal presumptions in Mr Pranthaman's conviction raises serious concerns regarding his right to a fair trial, the presumption of innocence, and due process under international human rights law. The mandatory nature of his sentence appears to have prevented judicial discretion in considering the circumstances of the offence and his background. Moreover, there is no evidence that the death penalty does more than any other punishment to reduce or prevent drug trafficking. It is a penalty that is outdated, inhuman, biased against the most marginalised sections of society and its irreversible nature assumes great gravity as there is always the risk of executing an innocent person," said ICDP President Navi Pillay.

ICDP calls on Singaporean authorities, even at this last minute, to consider Mr Pranthaman's repatriation to Malaysia, his home country. By doing so, Singapore could follow the recent, encouraging precedent established by Indonesia who have repatriated prisoners, under sentence of death on drug-related charges, who are nationals of the Philippines, France and Australia back to their countries of origin. This decision represents a significant step towards a more humane and just approach to criminal justice, especially in the Southeast Asian region, prioritizing the importance of diplomatic engagement in the region and legal reforms that prioritize second chances over irreversible punishment. Noting diplomatic avenues, ICDP hopes that Malaysian authorities are taking all steps at their disposal to support Mr Pranthaman's case.

Background

The International Commission against the Death Penalty is currently composed of 25 Commissioners of high international standing following highly respected careers in public service and representing all regions of the world. The Commission acts with total independence under the leadership of President Judge 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.



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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 Support Group of 24 Member States 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.