

URGENT ACTION

SINGAPORE SETS EXECUTION OF MALAYSIAN MAN

Pannir Selvam Pranthaman was notified on February 16 that his execution would be carried out in Singapore four days later, on February 20. A Malaysian national, he was convicted in 2017 of importing 51.84g of diamorphine (heroin). The judge found that he had only transported the drugs but sentenced him to the mandatory death penalty as the prosecution did not issue a certificate of substantive assistance. Executions in Singapore have continued at an alarming rate, with nine men hanged since October 2024. We call on the government of Singapore to commute the death sentence of Pannir Selvam Pranthaman and immediately establish an official moratorium on all executions as a first critical step towards abolition of the death penalty.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **Second UA 107.24**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

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Email: pmo_hq@pmo.gov.sg

CC: Embassy of Singapore in the United States
Ambassador Lui Tuck Yew
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Washington DC 20008
Email: singemb_was@mfa.sg
Twitter/X: [@MFASg](https://twitter.com/MFASg)

Dear Prime Minister,

I urge you to immediately to halt the execution of **Pannir Selvam Pranthaman** and commute his death sentence. The death penalty in his case was imposed in violation of international human rights law and standards, which would render his execution unlawful and arbitrary.

International law and standards set out restrictions on the use of the death penalty to protect against the arbitrary deprivation of life. These include the prohibition against imposing this punishment as a mandatory sentence; for offenses that do not meet the threshold of the “most serious crimes”, including drug-related offenses; and after proceedings that do not meet the highest standards for a fair trial. Violations of all these safeguards are present in this case.

I am alarmed at the high rate of executions recorded in Singapore in recent months, with nine men hanged since the beginning of October 2024 alone. Singapore is one of only five countries known to have carried out executions for drug related offenses in 2023. Punitive drug policies have failed to tackle the use and availability of drugs in the country and offer no effective protection from drug-related harm.

I call on you to immediately intervene to halt the execution of Pannir Selvam Pranthaman, commute his death sentence, and establish an official moratorium on all executions.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Pannir Selvam Pranthaman is a talented musician from Malaysia who, while on death row in Singapore, has written poems and songs.

He was convicted on May 2, 2017, aged 29, of importing into Singapore 51.84g of diamorphine (heroin) and sentenced to the mandatory death penalty. The Court of Appeal rejected his ordinary appeal on October 18, 2018. The judge found Pannir Selvam Pranthaman to have been involved only in the transport of drugs, meeting the “courier” requirement under the law. However, the prosecution did not provide him with a certificate of substantive assistance, leaving no option to the judge but to impose the mandatory death penalty.

Following amendments to the Misuse of Drugs Act in 2013, judges in Singapore have a limited sentencing discretion in two scenarios: first, where a person is found to have a mental or intellectual disability that substantially impaired their mental responsibility for the offense, or second, where a person is found to be a “courier” and the prosecution issues a certificate of substantive assistance. Without the certificate of substantive assistance, the court was deprived of any discretionary powers when sentencing Pannir Selvam Pranthaman, as the decision shifted in practice to the prosecution. This violated his right to a fair trial, as it effectively placed the decision between a life-or-death sentence in the hands of an official who is not a neutral party in the trial and should not have such powers; it undermined the independence of the judiciary, breaking down the separation that must exist between prosecution and court; and violated the principle of “equality of arms,” namely the equal powers of prosecution and defense before the courts.

Pannir Selvam Pranthaman had his execution previously set for May 24, 2019. It was halted one day before it was due to be carried out, after the Court of Appeal allowed for the consideration of extraordinary appeals. Further legal appeals involving Pannir Selvam Pranthaman were recently considered and rejected, and he is now believed to be at risk of having his execution notice issued once again. On February 16, 2025, the Singapore authorities notified Pannir Selvam Pranthaman and his family that his execution would be carried out four days later, on February 20.

International law and standards prohibit the imposition of the mandatory death penalty, as it denies the possibility of considering the circumstances in the case. Moreover, international law and standards require that the imposition of the death penalty be restricted to the “most serious crimes” involving intentional killing. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception. As of today, 113 countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes and 144 are abolitionist in law or practice. Singapore remains one of a small group of countries that still carry out executions, and an even smaller group that apply the death penalty for drug related offenses.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: May 1, 2025

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Pannir Selvam Pranthaman (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-malaysian-man-believed-at-risk-of-execution-singapore-107-27/>