

URGENT ACTION

MALAYSIAN IN SINGAPORE SEEKS COMMUTATION

The appeal hearing of Pannir Selvam Pranthaman has been set for May 7. He received an eleventh-hour stay of execution on February 19, after the Court of Appeal granted his request to file an application for a review of his case. Should his appeal be rejected, Pannir Selvam Pranthaman could be at imminent risk of execution for the third time. A Malaysian national, he was convicted in 2017 of importing 51.84g of diamorphine (heroin) into Singapore. The trial 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 12 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 **Third UA 107.24**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Lawrence Wong
Prime Minister of Singapore
Office of the Prime Minister
Orchard Road, Istana
Singapore 238823
Fax: +65 6835 6621
Email: pmo_hq@pmo.gov.sg

Send a copy of your letter to the address below

CC: Embassy of Singapore in the United States
Ambassador Lui Tuck Yew
3501 International Place, NW,
Washington DC 20008
Email: singemb_was@mfa.sg
Twitter/X: [@MFASg](https://twitter.com/MFASg)

Dear Prime Minister,

I urge you to immediately intervene to commute the death sentence imposed on **Pannir Selvam Pranthaman**. 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 12 men hanged since the beginning of October 2024. Singapore is one of only four countries known to have carried out executions for drug related offenses in 2024. Punitive drug policies have failed to tackle the use and availability of drugs in the country.

I call on you to immediately intervene to remove the threat of execution and commute the death sentence imposed on Pannir Selvam Pranthaman, as well as establish an official moratorium on all executions, as a first critical step towards full abolition of the death penalty.

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 including some in collaboration with other Malaysian artists. The Court of Appeal has set a hearing on his latest appeal for May 7, 2025. Should it be rejected, Pannir Selvam Pranthaman could be exposed to the risk of execution for the third time.

Pannir Selvam Pranthaman 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’s conviction relied on the legal presumption of knowledge of the drugs. Presumptions of guilt effectively lower the threshold of evidence needed to secure a conviction in capital cases, undermine fair trial guarantees under international human rights law, and violate the right to be presumed innocent, a peremptory norm of customary international law.

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 considered and rejected, and he had his execution set for a second time in February 2025, with a shortened notice period of only four days. On February 19, the night before it was due to be carried out, the Court of Appeal issued a stay of execution to allow him to file a Post-appeal Application in a Capital Case (PACC), which is expected to be heard on May 7.

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

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: June 30, 2025

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

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-singapore-sets-execution-of-malaysian-man-singapore-second-ua-107-24/>