



Towards a Vibrant Civil Society

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Singapore: Think Centre condemns impending execution of Syed Suhail bin Syed Zin

As dawn breaks on 18 September, Singaporean, Syed Suhail bin Syed Zin, will be executed by the State. His impending execution is a grim reminder that Singapore's factory of death has never ceased.

The execution is a tragic irony and a mockery of the slogan "leave no one behind" bandied during the ongoing pandemic.

We recall the recent chastisement that no one has a monopoly over compassion. But the handling of Syed Suhail's pending execution is devoid of compassion. His family was informed barely a week ahead of the set execution. Notwithstanding the travel restrictions in place, no arrangement or allowance has been made for his family members who are over in Malaysia to travel to Singapore.

The dispassionate approach contradicts the eagerness to open up travel green lanes for businesses. We now know for certain that Singapore's "new normal" is no different from the old normal, where money making and keeping the economic wheel spinning remains a priority.

Syed Suhail was first arrested in August 2011 and sentenced the mandatory death penalty in late 2015 according to a High Court written judgement. The Singapore government amended its mandatory death penalty framework by July 2012 but he was not able to rebut the statutory presumptions retained in the amended laws. A finalised execution date means all avenues for reprieve including petitioning the President has been exhausted.

We regretfully remind that no clemency has been granted in Singapore since 1998.

Singapore's blemished clemency process is heavily dependent on the Cabinet's prerogative. The President's role is reduced to no more than a dignified post-master. If Syed Suhail's petition has been processed in the past few months, taking into account the political renewal from the recent election, we are doubtful if the Cabinet have had the time or capacity to properly review the petition.

Singapore's harsh policy stand to use the death penalty against drugs offence is an anomaly. According to Amnesty International, it is one of four countries known to have carried out executions for drug-related offences in recent years.

Currently, 106 countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes and more than two-thirds of the world's countries are abolitionist in law or practice.

Think Centre strongly reiterates that the death penalty is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. We oppose the use of capital punishment in all circumstances, and especially the mandatory death penalty for non-violent crimes in the case of drug offences.

We call for the execution of Syed Suhail bin Syed Zin to be halted. Singapore must re-think its use of the death penalty to truly "leave no one behind".