

# Amnesty International UK

# MEDIA BRIEFING

## COMMONWEALTH GAMES GLASGOW 2014

### SINGAPORE: EXECUTIONS RESUMED AFTER TWO-YEAR MORATORIUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MONDAY 28 JULY

“When discussing human rights abuses, Singapore doesn’t automatically spring to mind but the very recent execution of two men after a two-year moratorium, was a huge step backward which may well lead to the city-state having the highest execution rate in the world, per population.

“Freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association are also severely restricted with recent legislation further restricting internet news websites and the printed press. Dissent is curtailed through security legislation permitting arrest and detention of suspects for virtually unlimited periods of time without charge or judicial review.”

*Siobhan Reardon – Programme Director, Amnesty International Scotland*

**Amnesty spokesperson available throughout the Games**  
**Daily media briefings available throughout the Games**

#### SINGAPORE

**Population:** 5,399, 200

**President:** Lee Hsien Loong

**Games debut:** Auckland, 1950

**National sport:** Table tennis

**Delhi 2010 medal tally:** 10 gold, 12 silver and 8 bronze

**Human rights concerns:**

#### Death Penalty

Singapore carried out a double execution on July 18 this year, the first two prisoners to be put to death since 2011, according to Amnesty International researchers and the Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN).

Tang Hai Liang, 36, and Foong Chee Peng, 48, were executed at Singapore’s Changi Prison Complex. They had been convicted and mandatorily sentenced to death for drug-related offences in January and April 2011 respectively under the Misuse of Drugs Act.

On 14 November 2012, Singapore’s Parliament adopted amendments to abolish the mandatory imposition of the death penalty under certain circumstances in murder and drug trafficking cases. At least nine people had their death sentences reviewed and eventually commuted to life imprisonment and caning since the laws were amended.

The Singapore Government said that the two men executed waived their right to a review of their

mandatory death sentence, which they were entitled to after legislation was amended.

At least 26 people remained on death row in Singapore at the end of 2013.

With this resumption of executions, Singapore is setting itself against the global trend ending the use of the capital punishment, more than two-thirds of all countries having abolished the death penalty in law or in practice.

### **Corporal Punishment**

Judicial caning, an inherently cruel punishment amounting to degrading and inhuman treatment and, in severe cases, torture is a mandatory additional punishment for medically fit males aged 16 to 50 who have been sentenced to prison for a wide range of crimes, including vandalism, drug trafficking, rape, and immigration offenses.

### **Freedom of Expression, Peaceful Assembly and Association**

These rights are limited in Singapore in the name of security, public order, morality, and racial and religious harmony. The restrictions are interpreted broadly.

Recent legislation added more restrictions on internet news websites and thoroughly regulate printed press. Under the Public Order Act 2009, Singapore requires a permit for any cause-related public assembly which is, in practice, often denied as a result of discretion and broad interpretation of the grounds for denial exercised by the police. Associations with more than 10 members must seek approval to exist, and the Registrar of Societies has broad authority to deny registration if he determines that the group could be “prejudicial to public peace, welfare or good order.”

Singapore continues to use criminal defamation and contempt of court charges to curtail criticism of the government and the ruling party. The authorities also regularly use the Internal Security Act permitting arrest and detention of suspects for virtually unlimited periods of time without charge or judicial review.

### **Treatment of Migrant Workers**

Migrant workers – who amount to almost a quarter of the city-state’s population – face various forms of discrimination in Singapore. They are not afforded the same legal protection as nationals, and many work in very poor conditions. The principle of non-discrimination and the right to freedom of expression, assembly and association are afforded to citizens only in Singapore’s Constitution, effectively excluding migrant workers from these provisions.

Last year, Amnesty called on the Singapore authorities to prevent arbitrary deportation for 53 migrant workers who were accused of being involved in a riot. The plan to deport the workers denied them the right to due process. There were also concerns that another 28 workers who faced criminal charges related to the same incident would have access to a lawyer and be provided with a translator if necessary.

**Pauline Kelly: 07818 453070, 0131 718 6687 [pauline.kelly@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:pauline.kelly@amnesty.org.uk)**

**Niall Couper: 020 7033 1552, [niall.couper@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:niall.couper@amnesty.org.uk)**

**Eulette Ewart: 020 7033 6414, [eulette.ewart@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:eulette.ewart@amnesty.org.uk)**

**Out of Hours: 07721 398984**

**[www.amnesty.org.uk/scotland](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/scotland)**

**Follow us on Twitter: @AmnestyScotland**

**Facebook: Amnesty Scotland**