



The UIA Institute for the Rule of Law

STATEMENT

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Singapore

UIA-IROL Calls on Singaporean Authorities to Immediately Halt Execution of Malaysian National Pannir Selvam Pranthaman

UIA-IROL is alarmed by reports that Malaysian national Pannir Selvam Pranthaman may face execution on 8 October, following the rejection of his latest appeal in early September 2025. This case is emblematic of the broader pattern of mandatory imposition of the death penalty in Singapore under the Misuse of Drugs Act.

Mr. Pannir Selvam Pranthaman was convicted in May 2017 of importing 51.84 g of diamorphine (heroin), and sentenced to death under Singapore's Misuse of Drugs Act. Although the High Court of Singapore found that his role was limited to that of a "courier", he was nevertheless subjected to the mandatory death penalty, as the Public Prosecutor declined to issue a Certificate of Substantive Assistance, depriving the court of any discretion in sentencing.

On 5 September, the Court of Appeal dismissed his request for a stay of execution. His family was later informed that a notice of execution had been issued for the third time, after the President rejected Mr. Pannir Selvam's clemency petition on 3 October.

UIA-IROL expresses its deep concern at the risk of imminent execution Mr. Pannir Selvam Pranthaman faces, and deplores the use of the mandatory death penalty in this case. This regime, which removes judicial discretion and conditions sentencing on prosecutorial certification, is inconsistent with international human rights law and standards, and undermines the principles of proportionality, fairness, and due process.

UIA-IROL further recalls that international human rights bodies have repeatedly found the mandatory death penalty to be arbitrary and in violation of the prohibition against cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.¹

UIA-IROL is further concerned about the high rate of executions recorded in Singapore, unfortunately reflecting a worrying trend in the ESCAP region². Singapore was one of only four countries known to

¹ See A/67/279, [Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment](#), 2012, 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

² See Statement – [UIA-IROL Statement on the death penalty in 2025 and the increase in its use in the ESCAP region](#), 11 June 2025.

have carried out executions for drug-related offences in 2024³. In 2025, 11 people have been executed in the country, nine of whom were convicted of drug-related offences. The regrettable execution of Mr Datchinamurthy a/l Kataiah on 25 September 2025, another Malaysian national, marked a further and tragic regression, despite sustained calls from international bodies, civil society, and foreign governments to halt his execution.

UIA recalls that the use of death penalty for drug-related offences does not meet the threshold of the “most serious crimes” for which capital punishment may be applied under international law. Legal presumptions in Singapore’s drug legislation, which reverse the burden of proof onto defendants, compound this concern, further eroding fundamental guarantees of the presumption of innocence and the right to a fair trial.

The case of Mr. Pannir Selvam Pranthaman highlights the broader crossroads at which Singapore currently stands regarding capital punishment, and underscores once again the urgent need for reforms to bring Singapore’s legal framework into conformity with international human rights standards.

UIA-IROL joins today the multiple voices, including that of the Malaysian Bar Association⁴, calling upon the relevant Singaporean authorities to immediately halt the impending execution of Mr. Pannir Selvam Pranthaman.

UIA-IROL further calls on Singaporean authorities to:

- Take all necessary measures to commute Pannir Selvam Pranthaman’s death sentence without delay;
- Abolish mandatory death penalty provisions in domestic law, restoring full judicial review and clemency proceedings;
- Establish a moratorium on all executions as a first step towards the full abolition of the death penalty.

UIA-IROL reiterates once more its unwavering opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances, and in particular to its mandatory application.

More about UIA-IROL

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA-IROL) promotes the Rule of Law and supports and defends, in particular, (1) lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are harassed, threatened and/or persecuted in the exercise of their professions, (2) the independence of the legal and judicial professions, and (3) the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, especially in defense of human rights.

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³ See Joint Statement - [2025 World Drug Day: UNODC and CND must take urgent action to end unlawful use of the death penalty for drug-related offences](#), 25 June 2025.

⁴ See Press Release – [Malaysian Bar Urges for Intervention to Halt the Impending Execution of Pannir Selvam Pranthaman](#), 6 October 2025.