Singapore Executes Man for Drugs, Marking a Resumption of Executions After Two Year Pause

LONDON, 30 March 2022 - Abdul Kahar bin Othman was executed in Singapore early morning today. Mr Kahar Othman was sentenced to death for a drug offence in 2015. This marks the first execution in Singapore after two-year pause.

Naomi Burke-Shyne, Executive Director of Harm Reduction International, said, “By resuming executions, Singapore has returned to its position among the extreme fringe group of countries still applying the death penalty drugs.”

Harm Reduction International monitors the 35 countries which retain the death penalty for drug offences; 131 people were executed for drug offences around the world in 2021 – a shocking 336% increase from 2020. However, due to a severe lack of transparency, this figure likely represents only a fraction of all drug-related executions carried out.

“The death penalty is an abhorrent, outdated and inhumane form of punishment. Applying it for drug offences is a violation of international human rights law, as repeatedly reaffirmed by international human rights bodies,” she added.

At least three people have been given notice of execution for drug offences in Singapore in the past months. Earlier this week the Singapore Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal of Nagaenthran Dharmalinggam, a Malaysian man sentenced to death for a drug offence whose case has sparked worldwide condemnation, including by disability rights activists, the Malaysian Prime Minister and King, Delegations, members of the legal and medical profession, and UN human rights experts.