

## The Death Penalty

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Singapore has substantially increased execution rates between 2022-2026, with most carried out for drug-related offences. Persons with ongoing court proceedings have been executed, while persons with disabilities were executed without procedural accommodations. Persons on death row are regularly forced to self-represent, and, since June 2024, in some circumstances their execution notification periods were shortened. Legislative schemes have introduced procedural hurdles for persons on death row (PACC Act) and silenced genuine criticism of government activity (POFMA).

## Singapore's arbitrary use of the death penalty

- Executions are carried out by hanging for murder, kidnapping, use of firearms, and drug trafficking offences.
- Of the 45 executions since March 2022, 42 were for drug-related offences. 17 executions took place in 2025.<sup>1</sup>
- Drug trafficking attracts mandatory sentencing, which negates judicial discretion and violates international standards.

## Persons executed while court proceedings are ongoing

- Since August 2024, 7 people with ongoing court proceedings, including civil applications, were executed.
- The Court of Appeal dismissed Pannir Selvam Pranthaman's post-appeal application, finding that civil proceedings do not prevent an execution notice being issued, even if they require the person on death row's testimony.
- Executing individuals with ongoing proceedings undermines the right to appeal and violates international standards.

## Persons with disabilities executed

- Three persons who may have been living with disabilities have been executed without procedural accommodations since April 2022.
- Singapore has signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities but is yet to implement it into law.
- Nagaenthran a/l K Dharmalingam was executed in 2022, despite having borderline intellectual functioning (FSIQ score 69) and an ADHD diagnosis.

<sup>1</sup> This includes three executions so far in 2026, as at 5 February 2026.

## Access to justice remains limited in Singapore

- Punitive cost orders against lawyers have forced persons on death row to self-represent in legal proceedings.
- The Post-Appeal Applications in Capital Cases (PACC) Act, effective June 2024, requires approval from a CoA judge if an application to stay an execution is to be filed and heard. At least 9 of 10 post-appeal applications have been dismissed summarily since PACC introduced.
- In cases where there has been a previous execution notice issued, persons on death row have had their notification time shortened from 7 days to 4 days since June 2024.

## Limitations on freedom of expression

- The Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA) grants any Minister broad powers to censor information deemed a “false statement of fact” if it is in the “public interest” to issue a Direction.
- At least 142 Correction Directions have been issued since POFMA was enacted in 2019, undermining genuine criticism of the government by silencing dissenting opinions.
- Since 2023, Transformative Justice Collective (TJC) has received 7 POFMA notices, with further notices issued to individual TJC members. In 2024, TJC was issued a two-year ‘declared online location’, stifling its ability to use its online platforms. TJC and three of its members are also being investigated under a section of POFMA for allegedly deliberately spreading falsehoods—if convicted, penalties can include significant fines or even imprisonment.
- POFMA purports to have extraterritorial scope to persons or corporations in or outside Singapore.
- The Public Order Act 2009 prohibits public assembly unless a police permit is obtained. Only citizens can participate and police have broad discretion to refuse to issue a permit.

## Recommendations

- Impose an immediate moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty, and replacing it with sentencing options that are fair, proportionate, and consistent with international human rights standards and judicial discretion.
- In the interim, take steps such as ceasing executing for drug-related offences, removing the mandatory death penalty, and guaranteeing legal representation for all capital defendants from arrest through to execution.
- Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), its Second Optional Protocol, and the Convention against Torture.
- Implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee's 2024 recommendations on women's access to justice and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) within the domestic legal framework.
- Publish timely, transparent and comprehensive data on death sentences, and repeal domestic laws authorising restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly that contradict international norms, such as POFMA.
- End intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders, social media users and government critics, and ensure human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of reprisals.
- Repeal legislative authorisation for use of detention without trial, such as the Internal Security Act and the Criminal Law (Temporary Provisions) Act.