



STATEMENT IN RELATION TO THE IMPOSITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY BY REMOTE COURT HEARINGS

7 June 2020
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN) expresses grave and serious concern in relation to recent decisions taken by courts in Singapore and Nigeria to hand down the death penalty over video conference.

In Nigeria, on 4 May 2020 Olalekan Hameed was sentenced to death for allegedly murdering his employer's mother, and in Singapore on 15 May 2020, Punithan Genasan was sentenced to death for his alleged role in a heroin transaction. Both sentences were provided via a Zoom remote video call, and both men have been sentenced to death by hanging.

The use of video conferencing technology like Zoom to hand down the death penalty, a sentence with absolute finality, has been labelled as particularly callous by observers. When an accused faces a potential sentence of death, the need to uphold their access to the highest standard of fair trial rights is paramount. A court hearing that takes place via video conferencing, raises a number of concerns including the accused's ability to understand the Court's findings; their ability to properly instruct legal counsel and their access to interpreters where necessary.

ADPAN maintains that the death penalty is cruel and unusual in all circumstances and advocates for the abolition of the death penalty worldwide. In the interim, we urge both Nigeria and Singapore to not only suspend these sentences but also immediately cease the use of video conferencing for death penalty cases.

Rachel Zeng and Sara Kowal

For and on behalf of ADPAN (Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network)

Email: contactadpan@gmail.com

Website: <https://adpan.org/>

ADPAN

ADPAN is the peak regional body for organisations committed to the abolition of the death penalty across Asia-Pacific, with members from approximately 22 countries within the region. As such, ADPAN maintains that the death penalty violates the right to life, that it is the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and that the death penalty should be entirely abolished internationally.