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International outcry grows as Singapore's incarceration of conscientious objector unveils human rights breach



In Prison For Exercising Peace

[Court Magazine](#) (03.03.2024) - Singapore, a global hub of economic prosperity and technological advancements, has garnered international acclaim. However, beneath this polished facade exists a dark reality, one that cannot be ignored – the human rights violations perpetuated through its compulsory military conscription. With a specific focus on Jehovah's Witnesses and other individuals imprisoned due to their refusal to partake in military service, Singapore's track record is a blatant breach of numerous fundamental human rights articles.

Violation of Freedom of Conscience and Religious Beliefs

At the heart of this issue lies the dire infringement upon the freedom of conscience and religious freedom experienced by Jehovah's Witnesses and other conscientious objectors in Singapore. As followers of biblical teachings, Jehovah's Witnesses are committed to

upholding the principle of nonviolence, striving to live by the commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." However, their unwavering commitment to their faith and refusal to bear arms in the military have led to their unlawful imprisonment.

Singapore's Constitution guarantees freedom of religion under Article 15, recognizing the right to profess, practice, and propagate religious beliefs. Yet, the ill-treatment and imprisonment of Jehovah's Witnesses solely due to their refusal to take up arms is a clear violation of this fundamental right. Singapore's actions undermine the very moral fabric of its society and severely tarnish its international reputation.

Breach of International Human Rights Articles

Not only does Singapore's compulsory military service infringe upon the freedom of conscience, but it also contravenes numerous international human rights standards. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), to which Singapore is a signatory, clearly highlights the following rights that are being flagrantly violated:

Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.

Article 18: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.

Article 20: Everyone has the right to peaceably assemble and associate.

Singapore's persisting violations against these fundamental rights serve as a grave concern for the international community and demand immediate attention and action.

The Global Human Rights Taskforce's Level 4 Travel Advisory

Recognizing the extent of human rights abuses in Singapore, the Global Human Rights Taskforce has issued a Level 4 Travel Advisory, urging individuals to refrain from traveling to the nation. This advisory serves as a resounding testament to the stark reality of human rights violations and the urgent need for justice.

"No one is safe in Singapore," Joseph Bonner, President of the Global Human Rights Taskforce, tells Court magazine. He adds, "unless Singapore releases their prisoners whose only crime is non-violence, how can the international community respect a country that disrespects human rights so blatantly."

Demand for Justice

In light of Singapore's repeated human rights violations, it is imperative that immediate corrective action be taken. The international community must come together to address these concerns and put pressure on the Singaporean government to:

1. Respect the freedom of conscience and religious belief of all its citizens, including Jehovah's Witnesses and conscientious objectors.
2. Release all individuals imprisoned solely due to their refusal to participate in military service.
3. Re-examine the mandatory military conscription policy and consider alternative forms of national service for those exercising their right to conscientious objection.

Singapore's human rights violations through its mandatory military conscription, particularly concerning Jehovah's Witnesses and other conscientious objectors, are deeply troubling. By persistently disregarding the fundamental rights enshrined in both its own constitution and international human rights instruments, Singapore undermines

the values of justice, equality, and freedom it claims to uphold. It is high time for people around the world to join hands in demanding justice for all those affected by these violations and hold Singapore accountable for its actions.

[HRWF Database of FoRB Prisoners: Twelve Jehovah's Witnesses in prison](#)

[Jehovah's Witnesses](#)

[AW, Li Ming Alexander](#)

[BONG, Ray Young](#)

[CHONG, Nicolaus, Wei Ern](#)

[DACANAY, Norvin Cj Marc Gongon](#)

[IMMANUEL, Dev S/O Theorajah](#)

[LIM, Yong Seng Michael](#)

[MAGDARAOG, Angelo C.](#)

[POH, Chuang Xu Daniel](#)

[QUISEO, Johnrey Omar Yu](#)

[QUISEO, Junn Orville Yu](#)

[RINON, Cole Dawson Flores](#)

[TAN, Ming Jie](#)

Click on the names to get the details of their case.
