

Singapore court dismisses appeal by Sabahan on death row

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SINGAPORE: The appeal of Sabahan Yong Vui Kong against his death sentence on grounds of unequal treatment by the Attorney-General's Chambers has been dismissed by the Court of Appeal here.

Yong, 24, is on death row after being found guilty of possessing 42.27gm of heroin in June 2007.

In his appeal, he claimed that he did not receive equal treatment under Article 12 of the republic's Constitution as he was prosecuted under an offence with a mandatory death penalty while his Singaporean supplier Chia Choon Leong, 46, is currently held in executive detention.

In reading a summary of the joint judgment, Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong said the points brought up in Yong's appeal had no merit based on law and facts.

"The prosecution decided to seek a discontinuance not amounting to an acquittal for Chia as they did not have significant evidence against him.

"This is at the discretion of the Attorney-General's Chambers. All persons are equal before the law," he said before dismissing the appeal.

Yong's lawyer M. Ravi said: "It is deeply discouraging that the highest court in Singapore has failed to recognise that the legislative intent of the death penalty is not to execute young drug mules ruthlessly exploited by their drug syndicate bosses."

He maintained that it was unfair for Yong, who was 19 at the time of his offence, to face the death penalty when his "boss" was held under detention.

Ravi also claimed that the court had not spoken about another Singaporean, Koh Bak Kiong, 31, whom he had also included in their appeal after his charge, which was originally punishable by death, was reduced.

Koh was sentenced to 24 years in jail by the court in 2008, he said.

Ravi urged the Malaysian Government to immediately lodge a complaint to the International Court in The Hague over the matter.

“We are still waiting for a reply on a clemency petition to the Singapore president but we cannot wait long. The Malaysian Government needs to act fast,” he said.