

URGENT ACTION

BLOGGER FACES UP TO THREE YEARS IN PRISON

Seventeen-year-old blogger Amos Yee appeared in court on 17 August. He faces up to three years in prison under the Singapore Penal Code for posts in which he allegedly “wounded the religious feelings of others”. His trial is currently ongoing.

On 17 August, Singaporean blogger **Amos Yee** appeared in court for the first day of his trial where he faces up to three years in prison for blog posts in which he allegedly “wounded the religious feelings” of Muslims and Christians.

In May 2016, six criminal charges were brought against the 17-year-old blogger under Section 298 of the Penal Code, which covers offences related to religion and race. He also faces two separate charges for not reporting to police under previous bail conditions. This is not the first time that Amos Yee, who is representing himself in court, has been targeted by the authorities for comments on his blog site. In May 2015, he was sentenced to 55 days in jail for mocking Singapore’s first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

Under international law and standards, the right to freedom of expression is not limited to views that are widely acceptable and popular, rather, states must also respect and protect the expression of dissenting views, including those that some may find shocking or offensive. While the right to freedom of expression may be subject to certain restrictions provided by law, these restrictions must meet strict tests of necessity and proportionality. Protection of religious or other beliefs, or the religious sensibilities of their adherents, is not a permissible ground for restricting freedom of expression. Criticism of all public figures, including those exercising the highest political authority, is also protected by the right to freedom of expression.

On 16 August, David Kaye, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Expression, stated that the trial against Amos Yee “was deeply worrying and a sign of increased criminalisation of expression in the country.”

Please write immediately in English, or your own language:

- Urging the Singaporean authorities to drop all charges against Amos Yee that stem solely from the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to end the intimidation and harassment of bloggers and other government critics in the country;
- Calling on the authorities to repeal or substantially amend laws that unduly restrict the right to freedom of expression.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 SEPTEMBER 2016 TO:

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong
 Prime Minister Office
 Istana Annexe
 Orchard Road
 Singapore 238823
 Email: lee_hsien_loong@pmo.gov.sg
Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General V K Rajah
 Office of the Attorney General
 1 Upper Pickering St,
 Singapore 058288
 Email: agc@agc.gov.sg
Salutation: Dear Attorney General

And copies to:

Minister of Law K Shanmugam
 Ministry of Law
 100 High Street
 #08-02 The Treasury
 Singapore 179434
 Email: k_shanmugam@mlaw.gov.sg

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

BLOGGER FACES UP TO THREE YEARS IN PRISON

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The trial of blogger Amos Yee is yet another illustration of the Singapore authorities' clampdown on critics and peaceful dissent in the country. Opposition activists, bloggers and human rights defenders in Singapore continue to face political repression, reprisals and intimidation.

In June 2016, political activists Roy Ngerng and Teo Soh Lung were subjected to hours of investigation and the seizure of personal electronic equipment in regards to their Facebook postings on a by-election "cooling off" day, which prohibits campaigning on the eve of elections. Amnesty International believes that these investigations may be politically motivated, as other politicians who have been reported for similar violations in the past have not faced the same level of inquiry.

In the same month, blogger and activist Han Hui Hui was found guilty of illegal assembly and causing a public nuisance and fined SGD \$3,100 (USD \$2,281) for leading a peaceful protest that took place on 27 September 2014 in Hong Lim Park, the only space where people are able to assemble and demonstrate without a police permit. Two others, Low Wai Choo and Koh Yew Beng, were also found guilty of illegal assembly and fined USD \$335 each.

Name: Amos Yee

Gender m/f: m

UA: 192/16 Index: ASA 36/4685/2016 Issue Date: 18 August 2016