



**GLOBAL  
COMMISSION ON  
DRUG POLICY**

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**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR**  
**For immediate release**

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**Judicial corporal punishment is unacceptable for all offences, including drug-related ones: comment on recent caning in Singapore**



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*Geneva, 25 August 2020 (Global Commission on Drug Policy)*

The caning of Ye Ming Yuen in the Changi prison of Singapore, on August 18<sup>th</sup>, is a horrific reminder of the use of judicial corporal punishment for people incarcerated for drug offences in many countries in the world. The Global Commission on Drug Policy condemns, in the most powerful way and in the strongest terms, the use of these methods which are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and which deprive people of their most basic dignity.

Corporal punishment is a form of torture. It was embedded in the judicial legacy of colonial powers. It is still used in a number of countries, including but not limited to Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei-Darussalam, Iran, Sudan, Yemen, and Pakistan. It has no deterrent effect on crime statistics. It aims to scare, humiliate, and degrade those caught in the net of the illegal drug market.

Every citizen of countries which deploy this cruel and inhumane punishment risks corporal punishment if convicted of a crime which carries that sanction. In an unfair and unreasonable justice system, where sentences are disproportionate and humiliating, no one is immune.

Our societies cannot afford a straitjacket criminal justice system where repression is the prime way to enforce laws, including those which are unfair, unjust, and disproportionate. We need societies which are flexible, adaptable and humane, and in which people are not intimidated and tortured. Reforming drug policies, opening debates on drug control and on empowering citizens for informed decisions, and considering how to end these degrading and cruel punishments is more timely now than ever.

*Rt. Hon Helen Clark, Incoming Chair of the Global Commission on Drug Policy*

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### **About the Global Commission on Drug Policy**

The Global Commission on Drug Policy was established in 2011 by political leaders, cultural figures, and globally influential personalities from the financial and business sectors. The Commission currently comprises 26 members, including 14 former Heads of States or Government and four Nobel Prize laureates. Its mission is to promote evidence-based drug policy reforms at international, national and regional levels. These reforms must also address issues of public health, social integration and security, with strict regard for human rights.  
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