

## **Democracy institutions all over the world call on the IBA to speak up on Singapore**

11 Oct 07

International organisations across the world have endorsed a resolution urging the International Bar Association (IBA) to speak up on human rights abuses in Singapore during its conference next week.

The IBA's annual conference is scheduled to begin this Sunday 14 Oct 07 and last through till 19 Oct.

Organisations such as the World Movement for Democracy, the Council for the Community of Democracies, Liberal International and the Club of Madrid as well prominent lawmakers and democracy advocates are signatories to the resolution, putting Singapore firmly on the radar of the global democracy movement.

They are calling for the IBA to "express its concern at the lack of respect for the rule of law in Singapore" and to "urge the Singapore government to practice the rule of law and not the rule by law by signing and ratifying the ICCPR (international Covenant of Civil and Political Rights)."

The IBA will organise a one-day Rule of Law Symposium on 19 Oct 07. Singaporeans are encouraged to attend the Symposium to see how Singapore can better adhere to the rule of law.

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### **The Resolution**

THIS RESOLUTION calls on the IBA which is holding its prestigious annual conference in Singapore from October 14-19, 2007, to take an unequivocal stand on the human rights violations and curtailment of democratic development in Singapore. Such a stand is consistent with principles outlined in the IBA's 2005 Resolution on the Rule of Law adopted in Prague.

Appreciative of the effort made by the IBA to hold the Rule of Law Symposium during its annual conference and opening the attendance to members of the public in Singapore;

Concerned that there are several outstanding cases of criminal prosecution and police investigation against democracy activists for speaking in public and for holding public gatherings in Singapore;

Aware of the on-going defamation suits against the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) and the Far Eastern Economic Review by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew as well as numerous past cases of defamation suits brought on by ruling People's Action Party leaders and officials against members of opposition parties;

Vexed by the continued ban on SDP Secretary-General Chee Soon Juan's travel overseas as well as the disbarment of his standing for elections as a result of his bankruptcy from repeated defamation suits;

Alarmed at the award of summary judgments to the PAP plaintiffs in defamation lawsuits in 2001 and 2006 involving Chee Soon Juan, Chee Siok Chin and the SDP, and the consistent and repeated awarding of cases to the Singapore Government and the PAP in court cases by the Judiciary;

Noting the use of detention without trial on political dissidents and the intimidation of released political prisoners;

Wary that there is no independent election commission and that elections are conducted by the Elections Department which is supervised by the Prime Minister's Office;

Saddened by the control of the media through state-owned companies like MediaCorp and the Singapore Press Holdings as well as the ban on political films and videos;

Observing that Singapore has yet to ratify the United Nation's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);

Regretting that one of the objectives of the IBA's Rule of Law Symposium on 19 October 2007 is to give participants "a clear understanding of the Asian perspective of the Rule of Law."

NOW THEREFORE THAT WE, the undersigned, call on the IBA to:

Express its concern at the abuse of human rights by the Singapore government and the lack of respect for the rule of law in Singapore;

Urge the Singapore government to practice the rule of law and not the rule by law by signing and ratifying the ICCPR;

Call on the Singapore government to respect the universality of human rights as enshrined in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Meet with Singaporean dissidents and victims of the Singapore Government's human rights violations and invite them to speak at the Rule of Law Symposium.

Reject the notion of the "Asian perspective" of the Rule of Law and reaffirm its commitment to the universal concept of the Rule of Law.

Inform its members of the human rights situation in Singapore by posting this resolution on its website.

Signed,

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