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**Singapore: Human rights defender and lawyer Ravi Madasamy suspended from practice for five years for accusing the attorney-general's office**

On 21 March 2023, the Court of Three Judges issued a five year suspension order against prominent human rights lawyer and human rights defender **Ravi Madasamy (M. Ravi)** for making "grave and baseless accusations of improper conduct" against the Attorney-General of Singapore. The five-year suspension is the maximum allowable sanction for a lawyer's misconduct.

[M. Ravi](#) has been an international human rights lawyer in Singapore for the last 20 years. He has argued in favour of landmark human rights and constitutional law cases concerning issues of the constitutionality of the mandatory death penalty, freedom of expression, defamation laws, freedom of assembly, contempt of court and access to legal representation. M. Ravi is also the founding member of the Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network and the Singapore Anti-Death Penalty Campaign (S.A.D.P.C.) community group.

The case and misconduct charges stem from an October 2020 online interview M. Ravi gave regarding the case of Malaysian national Gobi Avedian, who was sentenced to death in 2018 after being convicted of importing 40.22 grams of heroin into Singapore. In the interview, the human rights defenders expressed that the public prosecutor "has been overzealous in his prosecution and that has led to the death sentence of Gobi". On 19 October 2020, M. Ravi received a letter from the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) demanding an apology and to unconditionally retract allegations as they were "baseless assertions".

The hearing of M. Ravi regarding the contempt of court allegations will take place on 31 March 2023. M. Ravi is a vulnerable human rights defender having bipolar disorder. Such actions taken against his expressed dissent towards the authorities and his work for human rights has a significant impact on his mental health. Singapore has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that specifically protects not only the physical, but mental integrity of vulnerable persons and their fundamental freedoms. The UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers has also expressed her concern on the suspension order against the human rights defender.

Front Line Defenders believes that the charges filed against M. Ravi are directly related to his work in defence of the human rights of people in Singapore. Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned for the psychological wellbeing of the human rights defender.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Singapore to:**

1. Immediately drop all charges against M. Ravi as it is believes that they are solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Reverse the suspension of M. Ravi, as Front Line believes the human rights defender has been targeted solely as a result of its legitimate human rights activities;
3. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Singapore and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.