



Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

New Delhi, India. London, UK. Accra, Ghana

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NGO with Special Consultative Status with the Economic & Social Council of the United Nations

April 1, 2019

Dear Secretary General:

I write on behalf of the International Advisory Commission of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) urging you to oppose the outrageous and inhuman threat by the Government of Brunei Darussalam to impose a sentence of "death by stoning" on people in same sex relationships and adultery.

We regard this as a blatant and unacceptable violation of the right to life, sexual orientation and all human rights advocated by the Commonwealth over many years, and of the shared core principles of equality and non-discrimination as well as the values of tolerance, respect and non-discrimination enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter.

Brunei Darussalam's conduct is in direct contravention of its international obligations laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

What the Government of Brunei Darussalam proposes is a turning back of the clock of history and a flagrant violation of rights.

There are new harsh penalties for other 'crimes'. These include the medieval practice of amputation of the hands or feet as a punishment for robbery. What is truly horrifying is that the new laws, which are to come into force as early as April 3, will also apply to children.

If the Government of Brunei Darussalam does not rescind this dangerous move which will harm vulnerable groups, it is CHRI's view that its membership should be suspended.

We urge you, Madam Secretary General, to:

- intervene in the matter and engage with the Government of Brunei Darussalam urging them to not pass these laws in breach of their human rights obligations;
- raise this issue at the upcoming Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) meeting in April 2019, and propose that Brunei Darussalam be placed on CMAG's formal agenda if it fails to respect the values and principles shared and cherished by the Commonwealth.

Assuring you of our highest regards.

Sanjoy Hazarika,

International Director, CHRI, on behalf of its International Advisory Commission chaired by The Hon. Sam Okudzeto