

Malaysia: Convictions of two women sentenced to caning for having sexual relations must be quashed

15 August 2018, 14:30 UTC

Responding to yesterday's sentencing of two women to six strokes of caning and a fine of RM 3,300 after they were convicted of attempting to have sexual relations in Terengganu state, Gwen Lee, Amnesty International Malaysia's Interim Executive Director said:

"This deeply cruel sentence marks yet another severe setback in Malaysia's treatment of LGBTI people, which is increasingly troubling.

Rulings such as this only affirm that Malaysia is becoming a more hostile place for its LGBTI population

Gwen Lee, Amnesty International Malaysia's Interim Executive Director

"Across the country, LGBTI people are facing a climate of growing discrimination and persecution. Rulings such as this only affirm that Malaysia is becoming a more hostile place for its LGBTI population.

"Caning is a form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment amounting to torture and is prohibited under international law. As well as immediately overturning this brutal sentence, the Malaysian authorities must repeal the laws that impose these torturous punishments and ratify the UN Convention against Torture."

Background

The Terengganu Shariah High Court sentenced two Malaysian women, aged 22 and 32, to a fine of RM3,300 (£633) and six strokes of caning for attempting to have sexual intercourse.

The court's decision comes at a time of growing concern around the climate of fear and discrimination against LGBTI people in Malaysia. Last week, the Penang State Government removed the portraits of prominent LGBTI rights activists Nisha Ayub and Pang Khee Teik, from public display at the George Town Festival after being contacted by Religious Minister Datuk Dr. Mujahid Yusof Rawa, who said that the Parliament does "not support the promotion of LGBT culture in Malaysia".