

Round Table

Title:

Politics of Death Penalty Abolition and Retention in Asia

Outline:

In 2020, while the spread of COVID-19 and related deaths dominated media headlines, so did the news about the resumption of federal executions in the US after 17 years. Seventeen people were executed in the US (2020); however, at least 483 people were executed globally, which excludes the executions carried out in China estimated to be in the thousands. In Asia, as the world struggled to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, China announced the use of the death penalty for spreading the virus intentionally and for endangering public security, India and Taiwan resumed executions, and the Philippines intensified the killing of civilians under the rhetoric of ‘war on drugs’ while also attempting to reintroduce the death penalty. In recent years, Malaysia announced and later backtracked on its intention to abolish the death penalty; and Bangladesh and India have introduced the death penalty for rape and rape of a child under 12, respectively. Asian countries continue to have the highest proportion of countries resorting to the death penalty for drug-related offences. With experts on Bangladesh, China, India, the Philippines, and Malaysia, this roundtable will review the politics of abolition and retention in Asia from a number of perspectives—historical, legal and political, domestic and international.

Chair:

- Mai Sato, Associate Professor, Director of Eleos Justice, Monash University, Australia

Panellists (alphabetical order by surname):

- Karen Gomez Dumpit, Commissioner, Philippines Commission on Human Rights, the Philippines
- Thaatchaayini Kananatu, Senior Lecturer, Monash University Malaysia, Malaysia
- Saira Rahman Khan, Professor, School of Law, Brac University, Bangladesh
- Anup Surendranath, Assistant Professor, Director of Project 39a, National Law University Delhi, India
- Tobias Smith, Wilson Fellow, Wilson Center, US