



**Kirsten Han** ■■■ @kixes Mon Apr 24 02:14:24 +0000 2023

1/ In response to the media, CNB said Tangaraju had access to legal counsel throughout and that the court had found his complaint about not having an interpreter “disingenuous” cos he never asked for one for later statements. I’d just like to address these points ■ <https://t.co/PSXDr6S7Nr>

2/ Singapore recognises the right to legal counsel but it’s very problematic: the law only says that you have the right to legal counsel within a “reasonable time”, and in practice that prioritises police investigations over people’s rights.

3/ This means that people are interrogated by the police, and statements taken, without legal counsel to advise them of their rights and look out for their interests. Even a 19-year-old boy accused of murder was not able to speak to his lawyer: <https://transformativejusticecollective.org/2022/10/19/give-sylesnar-seah-access-to-his-lawyer-immediately/>

4/ When Singapore claims that a death row prisoner had legal counsel throughout, what they mean is that they had a lawyer at trial + appeal. That’s not enough: legal representation should be from point of arrest up till the execution. That should be what “throughout” means.

5/ Dismissing Tangaraju’s complaint about having been refused a Tamil interpreter as “disingenuous” because he didn’t ask for an interpreter again for future statements is outrageous and disconnected from the reality of people’s lived experiences.

6/ Tangaraju has lived a life in and out of prison where he’s been conditioned to obey authorities. He’d asked for an interpreter and was denied. It’s entirely plausible he stopped asking not cos he didn’t need an interpreter, but cos he felt that it’d be pointless to ask again.

7/ Also, why should the onus be on ordinary citizens—in situations of high stress, w/o access to legal counsel—to repeatedly fight the system to advocate for ourselves and push for things that we should be entitled to by right? Why isn’t the onus on the state to respect rights?

8/ Why was the focus “why didn’t he ask for an interpreter for future statements? He must have been disingenuous about his need for one!” instead of “why was he denied an interpreter in the first place”?

9/ Singapore will insist that a death row prisoner like Tangaraju received “due process”. The more they say that, the more I wonder if the people in charge of this country know what “due process” means.