

The Norwegian Nobel Committee
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Dear Selection Committee Members,

Nomination: Dr. Chia Thye Poh (Singapore)

I am writing in to nominate Dr. Chia Thye Poh (Singapore) for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Dr. Chia is a former political prisoner who was arrested in 1966 at the age of 25 and detained without charge or trial for nearly 23 years under Singapore's Internal Security Act. He was subsequently subjected to a range of personal and political restrictions for another 9 years, interned first on the island of Sentosa then on the main island of Singapore. He was only released of all restrictions on 27 November 1998 at the age of 57.

His total length of incarcerations and restrictions amount to some 32 years, more than the 27 years Nelson Mandela was detained.

Born in 1941, Dr. Chia graduated in physics from Nanyang University, worked as a secondary school teacher, a graduate assistant and was a social activist before becoming Barisan Sosialis' elected member of the Legislative Assembly for Jurong Constituency in 1963 at the age of 22.

His detention and restrictions are linked to his role in political activities in the early 1960s. These activities include protests calling for an end to the bombing in Vietnam by the US during the Vietnam War as well as quitting Parliament to engage in civil disobedience over the Singapore government's split from Malaysia.

The People's Action Party, the government of the day, arrested and detained Dr. Chia under the Internal Security Act for his lead role in a street procession on 8 October 1966. Its position was Dr. Chia's actions were prejudicial to the stability of Singapore.

It is important to note that during this period of Singapore's history and the rise into power of the People's Action Party in the 1960s, the tool of choice for the party had been Internal Security Act through which it arrested and detained without trial its political opponents.

Dr. Chia's detention and the restriction his personal and political rights over a period of 32 years is thus intimately tied to the People's Action Party's uninterrupted rule as a single party in power for over 50 years and its use of the Internal Security Act and other legal instruments. Under its rule many have been arrested, detained without trial and bankrupted through civil law suits for their political activities against the ruling People's Action Party and its officials.

In 2015, as Singapore celebrates 50 years of independence under the administration of the People's Action Party, contemporary activists continue to be subjected to defamation suits and other legal sanctions as they speak up against this regime.

In the case of Dr. Chia, the PAP government had over the years unsuccessfully tried to extract self-implicating statements from him in exchange for his release from detention. However, Dr. Chia's steadfast resistance to self-incrimination throughout his detention and restrictions over 32 years is the work that is deserving of the Nobel Peace Prize.

He has over the years been a source of inspiration for those who have taken the hard road of speaking up for political and other freedoms in Singapore - a road still fraught with difficulties and

challenges. Thus, in a modern city-state like Singapore where the levers of power, control and suppression are sophisticated, Dr. Chia's contribution is best assessed for its inspirational political contribution and the energy it affords current activists.

In 1989, when Dr. Chia was in Sentosa, I co-interviewed him for a student newsletter. I was then a second year undergraduate at the National University of Singapore. During the interview Dr. Chia said his motivation in politics was to "struggle for a fair, just and democratic society" and while being detained his "main concern is to achieve complete freedom."

It has been 25 years ago since I last meet him. And since then I have seen how his struggle in the early 1960s for freedom and the price he paid under the PAP regime is relevant in the context of all the costs those who advocate for political freedom and civil rights continue to pay under the current ruling party.

However, it is also important to note, given the nature of Singapore's politics and its compliant network of elites, the contributions of persons such as Dr. Chia are often vilified and negated by a self-serving narrative constructed and put into place by the People's Action Party led government.

I am stepping forward as a nominator as I feel Dr. Chia is worthy of consideration for the Nobel Peace Prize for his pioneering work and inspirational continuity through the sacrifices he made by enduring decades length detention and restrictions. These include the psychological scars he continues to weather in silence.

Dr. Chia, born in 1941, is presently 74 years old and his last known professional affiliation is with Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands. In 2011 he was conferred the Lim Lian Geok Spirit Award.

I list at the end of this letter a set of references that contain more information on Dr. Chia Thye Poh.

For the consideration of the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. James Gomez