



International Commission  
against the Death Penalty

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Geneva, 29 March 2012

**Statement by the  
International Commission against the Death Penalty  
on Japan's first executions  
since July 2010**

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) strongly condemns the executions of 29 March 2012.

According to the Ministry of Justice three prisoners were executed today. Tomoyuki Furusawa, 46, Yasutoshi Matsuda, 44 and Yasuaki Uwabe, 48, were executed in three detention centres in Tokyo, Fukuoka and Hiroshima respectively. The hangings are the first to take place since July 2010.

Death penalty is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Executions in Japan are usually carried out in secret and prisoners are given little or no warning before they are executed.

There are reportedly more than 130 prisoners on death row in Japan.

While Japan resumes judicial killings the rest of the world is turning its back on the death penalty.

In the Asia region, Mongolia recently ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

More than 140 out of the 193 member states of the United Nations have abolished the death penalty in law or practice.

Japan is at a crossroad. It can continue down the death penalty road among a minority of countries or begin a journey towards abolition - a direction of travel where state executions play no part in a modern justice system.

As a first step in this direction, ICDP urges Justice Minister Toshio Ogawa not to sign further execution warrants.

ICDP calls on Japan to introduce an immediate moratorium on executions in line with the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions adopted in 2007, 2008 and 2010; and initiate an independent and comprehensive study on the use of the death penalty.

Federico Mayor  
President of the International Commission  
against the Death Penalty

## **Background**

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) was founded in Madrid in October 2010. ICDP opposes the death penalty under any circumstances believing that it violates the right to life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

ICDP promotes the abolition of capital punishment in law in those states that observe a de facto moratorium on the use of the death penalty and promotes moratoriums on executions in states that rarely use the death penalty. In states that continue to carry out executions ICDP urges strict adherence to international standards. ICDP works with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, governments and non governmental organizations to further the abolition of capital punishment worldwide.

ICDP is composed of 13 personalities of high international standing from all regions of the world who act with total independence and neutrality and work under its President Federico Mayor. The work of the ICDP is supported by a diverse group of 16 states from all regions of the world that are committed to abolition of the death penalty. Switzerland currently holds the Presidency of the Support Group which will pass to Norway in October this year. There is small secretariat in Geneva which is responsible for organizing the work of the ICDP.