



Geneva, 29 October 2014

Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Pope Francis calls for the abolition of the death penalty

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) welcomes the strong call by Pope Francis to abolish capital punishment during a speech on 23 October.

In an audience with delegates from the International Association of Penal Law, the Pope termed capital punishment as "penal populism" that promises to solve society's problems by punishing crime instead of pursuing social justice. During his speech, Pope Francis called on "all Christians and people of goodwill ... to fight for the abolition of the death penalty be it legal or illegal, in all of its forms."

"I warmly welcome the timely and important call by His Holiness to the international community stop the death penalty and to place "human dignity above all else." ICDP strongly support His reminder that the death penalty has no deterrent effect and that it does not solve social or economic problems," said ICDP President Federico Mayor.

"ICDP considers this call by the Pope as an extremely important support towards the global abolition movement as we believe that this cruel and degrading punishment has no place in the 21st century," added President Mayor.

The Pope's call comes at a crucial time when the UN General Assembly will vote for the fifth time calling for a moratorium of the death penalty in December this year, a month that will also mark the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – the only international legal instrument with worldwide scope to abolish capital punishment. The UN General Assembly has voted overwhelmingly four times for a global moratorium on capital punishment, with increased support on each occasion.

Federico Mayor
President of the International Commission
against the Death Penalty

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Members

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Robert Badinter

Mohammed Bedjaoui

Ruth Dreifuss

Michèle Duvivier
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Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Ibrahim Najjar

Bill Richardson

Honorary Member

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Background

ICDP was founded in Madrid in October 2010. ICDP is currently composed of 14 persons of high international standing from all regions of the world who act with total independence and neutrality and work under its President Mr Federico Mayor.

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 nongovernmental organizations to further the abolition of capital punishment worldwide.

The work of ICDP is supported by a diverse group of 18 states from all regions of the world that are committed to the abolition of the death penalty. Its secretariat is based in Geneva.