



**International Commission
against the Death Penalty**

President

Federico Mayor

Members

Giuliano Amato

Louise Arbour

Robert Badinter

Mohammed Bedjaoui

Ruth Dreifuss

Michèle Duvivier
Pierre-Louis

Hanne Sophie Greve

Asma Jilani Jahangir

Ioanna Kuçuradi

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Ibrahim Najjar

Bill Richardson

Honorary Member

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

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Madrid, 20 March 2015

**Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty:
ICDP President meets with Pope Francis**

On 20 March 2015, ICDP President Mr Federico Mayor met Pope Francis in a private audience at the Vatican and discussed issues related to the abolition of the death penalty and areas of mutual cooperation. President Mayor highlighted during the audience that there is a strong global trend towards abolition of the death penalty. According to the United Nations, some 160 countries from all regions have abolished the death penalty or do not execute. Mr Mayor added that these nations have recognized that modern justice systems can protect the public from crime without recourse to the irrevocable and cruel nature of the death penalty and the constant risk of executing an innocent person.

Pope Francis presented a letter addressed to ICDP where he stated the following: "...Today the death penalty is not permitted, despite the gravity of the crime. The death penalty goes against the right to life and the dignity of a human being. The death penalty does not bring justice to the victims but it promotes vengeance."

The Pope and President Mayor discussed the possibility of organizing an international meeting, at the beginning of next year, of institutions working on the abolition of the death penalty.

They also discussed the importance of inter-religious and intra-religious dialogue, particularly taking into account the Holy Year of Mercy (from November 2015 to November 2016) in which this crucial subject will prominently feature within the context of the culture of peace and non-violence.

Pope Francis stressed the importance of the United Nations in addressing these challenges worldwide.

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Background

ICDP was founded in Madrid in October 2010. ICDP is currently composed of 15 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 Madrid