



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

Sylvie Kayitesi

Ioanna Kuçuradi

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Navanethem (Navi) Pillay

Ibrahim Najjar

Bill Richardson

Horacio Verbitsky

**Honorary Member**

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Rodolfo Mattarollo  
(1939-2014)

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## Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: A mission to Guatemala

The Secretary General of the International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission), Ms. Asunta Vivó Cavaller, visited Guatemala from 21 to 26 February 2016 at the invitation of the Office of Human Rights of the Archdioceses of Guatemala (ODHAG).

During her mission, Secretary General Vivó Cavaller held meetings with members of the Congress of Guatemala (Congress) and the President and Heads of Political Blocks and members of the Commission on Human Rights and Security of the Congress. She also held discussions with the President and magistrates of the Supreme Court, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and representatives of the executive branch. Ms Vivó Cavaller participated in a workshop organized by the National Commission to Support Prevention of Collective Violence. She met with representatives of civil society organizations, Bar Council of Guatemala and diplomats based in Guatemala City. Secretary General Vivó Cavaller was accompanied by former Minister and Ambassador Ms. Anaisabel Prera.

“Political leadership is crucial in ensuring that Guatemala moves away from the death penalty and joins the worldwide trend towards its abolition,” said ICDP President Federico Mayor. While noting that Guatemala is one of only two States in Latin America to retain the death penalty in its legislation and also noting that about 160 countries around the world, according to the United Nations, have abolished the death penalty or do not practice it, ICDP calls on Guatemalan authorities to promote, respect and protect the right to life, as provided in its Constitution, and uphold the dignity of the human being by introducing an official moratorium on the death penalty as a step towards its abolition. ICDP also notes that Guatemala last carried out executions in 2000 and that the Supreme Court has commuted all prisoners, reportedly 54 in number, who were under the sentence of death between 2005 and 2012 and that currently, there is no prisoner facing the death penalty. While the Commission recognises that Guatemala faces serious concerns of violent crime and security, it strongly believes that the application of the death penalty does not solve the underlying problems that contribute to this tragic situation. The death penalty does not create, nor advocate, a deterrent effect. Moreover, capital punishment carries the ever-present danger of executing an innocent person. ICDP also calls on Guatemalan authorities to strengthen the independence of its legal institutions, to modernize its prison system, to institutionalize transparent



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programmes for social reintegration for former prison inmates and to improve its system of criminal investigation.

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President  
International Commission  
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## Background

Composed of 17 Commissioners, who are persons of high international standing from all regions of the world, ICDP acts with total independence and neutrality and works 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. The Commission 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.

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.