

International Actions with the view to abolishing the death penalty

I. Background

There is an undeniable trend towards the abolition of the death penalty. Worldwide, countries have outlawed the death penalty; others have complied with the obligations of the Covenant to reduce the number of crimes punishable by death and respect fair trial guarantees, while others have applied a moratorium. Some countries that maintain the death penalty in their books have agreed to the aim of long-term of universal abolition. According to the United Nations, some 150 countries from all regions have abolished the death penalty or no longer carry out executions.

After having abolished the death penalty within their own borders, some States, have continued their actions by defending the right to life of their nationals sentenced to death abroad.

During the event, panelists will discuss how the process of abolition developed in their respective countries and how they have assisted nationals convicted abroad. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will provide a general overview of the different processes used to achieve abolition. Representatives of civil society will focus on the support they provide to States that are contemplating abolition or a moratorium.

II. Objectives

- Raise awareness about current developments on the issue.
- Review current actions with the view to abolishing the death penalty and the protection of nationals sentenced to death abroad.
- Identify best practices and reflect on the possible courses of joint action for like minded countries.

III. Structure and speakers

Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Héctor Timerman, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina

Ms. Federica Mogherini, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy

Mr. Bård Glad Pedersen, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway

Mr Jorge Lomónaco Tonda, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations in Geneva

Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights of the United Nations

Ms. Ruth Dreifuss, Member of International Commission Against the Death Penalty (ICDP) and former President of the Swiss Confederation

Ms. Alison Hannah, Executive Director of Penal Reform International (PRI)

Moderator: Mr. Alberto Pedro D'Alotto, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations in Geneva

Date: March 3rd 2014

Time: 13:15 – 15:00

Place: Palais des Nations – Room XXIII

Drinks and snacks offered from 13:00