



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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(1939-2014)

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Madrid, 11 March 2015

**Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty:
ICDP Commissioners participate in the biennial high-level panel
discussion on the question of the death penalty at the 28th Session of the
UN Human Rights Council, Geneva**

On 4 March 2014, ICDP Commissioners Mr Mohammed Bedjaoui and Ms Ruth Dreifuss participated in the first Biennial high-level panel discussion organized by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), during the 28th session of the UN Human Rights Council, on the question of the death penalty, which focussed on “Regional efforts aiming at the abolition of the death penalty and challenges faced in that regard.” Commissioner Mohammed Bedjaoui’s speech addressed the issues, including challenges, relating to the abolition of the death penalty in the Middle East and North Africa region. “Abolition (of the death penalty) depends on leadership,” said Mr Bedjaoui. He also added that “I admire those people who say that death penalty is radically incompatible with Islam and they base themselves on Islamic principles of pardon, of redemption, of pity, of mercy... The Koran stresses the value of pardon and of forgiveness, and I think it is very important we turn to that.”

Other panellists included Ms. Zainabo Sylvie Kayitesi, Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, European Union Special Representative for Human Rights, Ms. Tracy Robinson, President of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights and Ms. Sara Hossain, Commissioner (Asia-Pacific) of International Commission of Jurists.

The high-level panel discussion was chaired by the President of the Human Rights Council, Mr Joachim Ruecker; the opening remarks were made by Mr Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights. ICDP Commissioner Ms Ruth Dreifuss was the moderator of the discussion. The speeches of the participants were followed by interventions and questions by member-States of the Human Rights Council and civil society organisations. The participants of the panel responded to the interventions and queries. ICDP Commissioner Dreifuss, in her role as moderator, made the concluding remarks.

The year’s panel discussion marked the first-ever biennial high-level panel discussion, which was a follow-up to resolution 26/2, adopted in June 2014 by the Human Rights Council in which it was decided to convene biennial high-level panel discussions in order to further exchange views on the question of the death penalty. The focus of the high-level panel was decided after the high-level panel held on 5 March 2014 when the interventions and recommendations made by participants and panelists had emphasized the importance of regional efforts to advance the abolition of the death penalty.



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ICDP Commissioner Ms Asma Jahangir had participated in that high-level panel discussion.

ICDP thanks the OHCHR and the distinguished participants for the success of the high-level discussion panel and for their important contributions in discussions in order to advance the cause of abolition of the death penalty.

Federico Mayor
President of the International Commission
against the Death Penalty

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