



**International Commission
against the Death Penalty**

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Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: mass death sentences in Egypt

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) condemns the death sentences handed down to 529 individuals following a trial held on 23 and 24 March 2014 by the criminal court in Minya, Egypt.

According to reports, the 529 persons were sentenced to death on various charges, including membership of an organisation (the Muslim Brotherhood), unlawful incitement to violence and gathering. All the charges relate to events in July and August 2013 after the ouster of the Government of President Mohammed Morsi. The trial lasted two days, those convicted appear not to have received adequate access to defence lawyers and over three-quarters of those convicted were charged in absentia.

The criminal court in Minya was reportedly holding trial since 25 March for more than 600 persons on various charges including membership of the Muslim Brotherhood and there are fears that more death sentences could be passed.

“ICDP expresses its deep concern at the unprecedented number of people being handed the sentence of death and call for their retrial where they are brought to justice without recourse to capital punishment. We call on the Egyptian authorities not to pass sentences of death. The death penalty is irreversible and a violation to the right to life,” said Federico Mayor, President of ICDP.

The sentencing of 529 people in a single trial represents a spiralling increase of those sentenced to death in Egypt. In 2013, courts in Egypt handed down at least 109 death sentences; at least 91 individuals were sentenced to death in 2012 and 123 in 2011. The last known execution was carried out in October 2011. The authorities in Egypt do not release figures on death sentences and executions.

Most States no longer use the death penalty. According to the United Nations, some 150 countries from all world regions and cultures have abolished capital punishment or no longer execute. These nations have recognized that state killing is wrong and fails to deter crime more effectively than other punishments.

ICDP calls on the Government of Egypt to implement an immediate moratorium on executions as a step towards abolition of capital punishment in line with the UN General Assembly



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Resolutions calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty which were adopted in 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2012.

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BACKGROUND

ICDP was founded in October 2010. It is composed of 15 personalities of high international standing from all regions of the world who act with total independence and neutrality.

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.

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 the ICDP is supported by a diverse group of 18 states from all regions of the world.