



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

President
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Louise Arbour

Robert Badinter

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Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: A new reported execution in Belarus

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) expresses very serious concern at receiving reports that the execution of 26 year-old Belarusian national, Alyaksandr Hrunou, was carried out by authorities in Belarus.

According to information from the Viasna Human Rights Centre in Minsk, Mr Hrunou was executed on 4 November 2014 after being convicted, in 2013, for the stabbing to death of a woman. Reports reaching ICDP suggest that on 3 November, President Lukashenka had denied the presidential pardon to Alyaksandr Hrunou.

This execution of Mr Hrunou comes after a reportedly unusual decision on 22 October 2013 by the Belarusian Supreme Court when it ruled that the case against Alyaksandr Hrunou must be reinvestigated due to procedural mistakes. The Supreme Court's decision came two weeks after the UN's Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Belarus, Miklos Haraszti, urged the Belarusian authorities to introduce a moratorium on executions.

In Belarus, death sentences are carried out in strict secrecy, without giving adequate notice to prisoners, their families or legal representatives. As of date, there has been no official confirmation of Mr Hrunou's execution, which would bring the number of executions carried out by authorities in Belarus to three in 2014.

ICDP President Federico Mayor urges the authorities in Belarus "to stop carrying out any further executions and to establish an official moratorium on the use of the death penalty in line with United Nations General Assembly Resolutions adopted in 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2012". Belarus is the only country in Europe that still carries out executions.

ICDP further calls on Belarus to join some 160 countries from all regions who, according to the United Nations, have abolished the death penalty or do not execute – having recognized that modern justice systems can protect the public from crime without the irrevocable and cruel nature of the death penalty and the constant risk of executing an innocent person.

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Background

ICDP was founded in Madrid in October 2010. ICDP is currently composed of 14 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 the ICDP is supported by a diverse group of 18 states from all regions of the world that are committed to abolition of the death penalty. Its secretariat is based in Geneva.