



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

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Statement
On the Republic of Benin's accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) warmly welcomes Benin's accession on 5th July 2012 to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

Benin becomes the 75th state party to this important treaty.

In abolishing the death penalty Benin is an example to other African states observing a moratorium on executions but still retaining capital punishment in their criminal law.

In acceding to this Protocol Benin has shown important political leadership. ICDP hopes that other states moving towards abolition can also be encouraged to take the next step and ratify this Protocol.

Ratifying the Second Optional Protocol demonstrates that it is possible to deliver a criminal justice system that is effective at punishing the guilty without the barbarity and cruelty of the death penalty.

ICDP considers that the death penalty undermines human dignity and violates the right to life proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and it should not be applied whatever the circumstances, regardless of the gravity of the crime. Furthermore, there exists no conclusive evidence on the deterrent effect of the death penalty, and there is a real risk of executing innocent people.

Federico Mayor
President of the International Commission
against the Death Penalty

Background

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) was founded in Madrid in October 2010. 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 non governmental organizations to further the abolition of capital punishment worldwide.

ICDP is composed of 13 personalities of high international standing from all regions of the world who act with total independence and neutrality and work under its President Federico Mayor. The work of the ICDP is supported by a diverse group of 16 states from all regions of the world that are committed to abolition of the death penalty. Switzerland currently holds the Presidency of the Support Group which will pass to Norway in October this year. There is small secretariat in Geneva which is responsible for organizing the work of the ICDP.