



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

President

Federico Mayor

Members

Giuliano Amato

Louise Arbour

Robert Badinter

Mohammed Bedjaoui

Ruth Dreifuss

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Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: UN vote an opportunity to consign death penalty to history

(Geneva) “Today’s significant vote by the UN General Assembly calling for a global moratorium on capital punishment is an opportunity for all countries to consign the death penalty to history”, said the International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP).

The 67th General Assembly adopted the resolution in its plenary session by a decisive 111 votes in favour, with only 41 votes against and 34 abstentions – further isolating the few states that still use capital punishment.

“Countries from all regions in the world have again sent a strong moral and political message to the remaining executing countries that capital punishment has no place in the modern era,” said Mr Federico Mayor, President of the ICDP.

“Retentionist states should have the political courage to respect this vote and immediately suspend executions. It is an opportunity to free themselves of the death penalty’s terrible costs and consequences – including its cruelty, its ineffectiveness as a deterrent to serious crimes and the risk of executing the innocent.”

The vote builds on previous UN resolutions on the moratorium on the use of the death penalty in 2007, 2008 and 2010. On each occasion the call for a universal suspension of capital punishment has gathered strength. In 2007, the General Assembly voted 104 to 54 with 29 abstentions; in 2008, 106 to 46 with 34 abstentions; and in 2010, 109 to 41 with 35 abstentions.

“Today’s vote is further evidence of the global trend away from the death penalty. Just 21 states carried out executions in 2011”, added Mr Federico Mayor.

Although not legally binding, the resolutions are a significant political breakthrough, sending a powerful signal that the death penalty should be abolished everywhere and adding to growing momentum towards a death penalty free world.

Over two-thirds of the 193 UN Member States – according to the UN more than 150 countries from all regions and cultures – have now abolished capital punishment or do not use it. When the UN was founded in 1945, only eight states had abolished the death penalty for all crimes.



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Only a small number of states still carry out executions. The vast majority of executions take place in just five countries: China, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the USA.

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 is composed of 14 personalities 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 16 states from all regions of the world that are committed to abolition of the death penalty. There is small secretariat in Geneva.