



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

President

Federico Mayor

Members

Giuliano Amato

Louise Arbour

Robert Badinter

Mohammed Bedjaoui

Ruth Dreifuss

Michèle Duvivier
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Ibrahim Najjar

Bill Richardson

Horacio Verbitsky

Honorary Member

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

Founding Member

Rodolfo Mattarollo
(1939-2014)

Secretariat

Serrano Galvache, 26,
Torre Sur, 10 planta,
Despacho 10-78,
28071 Madrid,
Spain

Tel: +00 34 91 3799458
asunta.vivo@icomdp.org
info@icomdp.org

www.icomdp.org

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Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Belarus carries out an execution

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission) strongly condemns the reported execution of Syarhey Iwanow that was carried out by the authorities in Belarus. The reports of the execution came out on 6 May: the execution was presumably carried out in April at the Volodarka Prison in Minsk. Mr. Iwanow was sentenced to death on charges of the rape and murder of a young woman. He was 21 years old at the time of the crime.

This execution has been carried out just weeks after an International Conference titled “Death Penalty: Transcending the Divide” was held in Minsk which was co-organized by the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UN in Belarus and with the support of the British Embassy and in which ICDP was one of the participants.

“I am concerned that the execution of Mr. Iwanow, who had been sentenced to death by the Supreme Court of Belarus in March 2015, was carried out when his complaint was pending with the UN Human Rights Committee. ICDP and I are also concerned that the Belarusian authorities have not released information on the exact time of his death or his burial site. My thoughts are also with the murder victim and her family, to whom I would like to express my deepest sympathy,” said ICDP President Mr. Federico Mayor.

Additionally, ICDP notes with great concern the confirmation by the Supreme Court of Belarus on 6 May 2016 to uphold the death sentence against Sergei Khmelevsky.

“ICDP calls on authorities in Belarus to commute all death sentences, including that of Mr. Khmelevsky to terms of life imprisonment and to introduce an immediate moratorium on executions, as a step towards its eventual abolition,” said President Mayor.

Belarus is the only country in Europe that is still applying capital punishment. ICDP calls on the Government of Belarus to join the 160 countries that, according to the United Nations, have abolished the death penalty in law or practice. These States have recognized that modern justice systems can protect the public from crime without the irrevocable and cruel nature of the death penalty and the



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constant risk of executing an innocent person. These nations have recognized that state killing is wrong and fails to deter crime more effectively than other punishments.

Federico Mayor
President of the International Commission
against the Death Penalty

Background

The International Commission against the Death Penalty is composed of 17 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. The Commission 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 carry out the death penalty.

The Commission 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 Madrid.