



Geneva, 27 September 2012

Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty on Japan's first executions since July 2010

**International Commission
against the Death Penalty**

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The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) strongly condemns the two executions carried out on 27 September 2012.

Yukinori Matsuda (m), aged 39, was hanged for the robbery and murder of a couple in 2003 and Sachiko Eto (f), aged 65, was hanged for her role in the murder of six people in 1994 and 1995. According to the Ministry of Justice she is only the fourth woman to be executed since 1950.

Japan has now carried out seven executions this year.

The fact that there were no executions in 2011 had given some cause for optimism that Japan might be considering its use of the death penalty.

According to the United Nations over two-thirds of all states – more than 150 countries from all regions and cultures – have now rejected capital punishment because of its inherent cruelty, its ineffectiveness at deterring crime and the ever-present risk of executing the innocent.

At a time when more and more states are turning their back on the death penalty Japan's acceleration in executions is deeply disturbing.

Apart from the United States, Japan is the only major industrialised democracy to carry out capital punishment. But even in the US death sentences are declining as the public favour life imprisonment over state killing. In a few weeks time, on 6 November, voters in California will have the opportunity to repeal the death penalty.

The death penalty is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Executions in Japan are usually carried out in secret and prisoners are given little or no warning before they are executed. There are reportedly 131 prisoners on death row in Japan.

ICDP calls on Japan to introduce an immediate moratorium on executions in line with the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions adopted in 2007, 2008 and 2010; and initiate an independent and comprehensive study on its use of the death penalty.

Federico Mayor
President of the International Commission
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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.