International Commission against the Death Penalty

President

Federico Mayor

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Louise Arbour

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Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis

Asma Jilani Jahangir

Ioanna Kuçuradi

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Rodolfo Mattarollo

Bill Richardson

Secretaría

Serrano Galvache, 26
28071 Madrid
Tel: 91 394 8953
Fax: 91 394 8649
colaboradores.avc@maec.es

Secretariat

Serrano Galvache, 26
28071 Madrid
Tel: +34 91 394 8953
Fax: +34 91 394 8653
colaboradores.avc@maec.es
info@icomdp.org

www.icomdp.org

Madrid, 2 June 2011

Statement by the
International Commission against the Death Penalty
on the Imminent Execution of Devinder Pal Singh Bhullar and Mahendra Nath Das in India
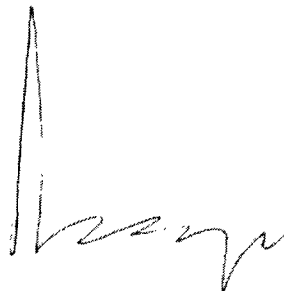
The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) is deeply concerned about the imminent risk of execution of Devinder Pal Singh Bhullar and Mahendra Nath Das after President Patil rejected the mercy petitions of death row prisoners.

The death penalty has very rarely been applied in India in recent years in line with the worldwide trend towards the abolition of capital punishment and in compliance with international human rights standards.

The last execution took place in August 2004 and was the first since 1995. Also it is important to highlight that a number of death sentences had been recently commuted by the High Court of India and that President Patil has commuted the death sentences of 20 prisoners since November 2009.

The death penalty undermines human dignity and violates the right to life recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and it should not be applied whatever the circumstances, regardless of the gravity of the crime.

ICDP, therefore, urges the Indian authorities to commute the death sentences of Devinder Pal Singh Bhullar and Mahendra Nath Das and to maintain the de facto moratorium on executions that has been observed in India for almost seven years.

Federico Mayor
President of the International Commission
against the Death Penalty