



Madrid, 29 July 2021

**International Commission
Against the Death Penalty**

ICDP 08/2021

President

Navanethem (Navi) Pillay

Vice-Presidents

Ruth Dreifuss

Ibrahim Najjar

Members

Marc Bossuyt

Helen Clark

Marzuki Darusman

Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis

Tsakhia Elbegdorj

Hanne Sophie Greve

Sylvie Kayitesi

Ioanna Kuçuradi

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Martin J. O'Malley

Ivan Simonovic

Marta Santos Pais

Horacio Verbitsky

Honorary Members

Giuliano Amato

Louise Arbour

Robert Badinter

Mohammed Bedjaoui

Bill Richardson

Marta Vilardell

Federico Mayor Zaragoza

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

Founding Members

Rodolfo Mattarollo,
(1939-2014)

Asma Jilani Jahangir
(1952-2018)

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

Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Sierra Leone Parliament votes a Bill abolishing the death penalty

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission) warmly welcomes the vote by the Parliament of Sierra Leone, on 23 July 2021, in favour of a Bill abolishing the death penalty.

“I would like to join ICDP Commissioners in congratulating Sierra Leone’s Parliament’s historic vote, which is an inspirational step recognizing the respect and protection of the fundamental right to life and, thereby, human dignity. It signals a move recognizing the death penalty’s cruelty and in removing the constant risk of executing an innocent person. In this sad, tragic times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sierra Leone has taken a decisive step saying no to death and yes to life and hope,” said ICDP President Judge Navi Pillay.

ICDP notes that this vote is the culmination of earlier commitments made by Government authorities creating an important momentum away from the moratorium that has been in place since the last executions – of 24 soldiers on charges of treason – were carried out in October 1998. Reports reaching ICDP suggest that in February 2021, President Julius Maada Bio officially gave the directives for the death penalty to be abolished from Sierra Leone’s laws. On 12 May 2021, during Sierra Leone’s United Nations’ Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Deputy Justice Minister Umaru Napoleon Koroma confirmed President Bio’s cabinet’s commitment to fully abolish the death penalty in the country. As of December 2020, 94 people were reportedly under sentence of death.

“ICDP notes President Bio’s commitment to end the death penalty in his country and calls on him to sign the abolition bill voted by the Parliament at the earliest possible opportunity and making it a law. By doing so, Sierra Leone will become the 23rd country in Africa to abolish capital punishment. We also call on his government to commute the people who are under sentence of death to terms of life imprisonment,” said President Pillay.

ICDP believes that the death penalty violates the fundamental right to life proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and should not be applied in any circumstances, regardless of the gravity of the crime. The Commission believes that this important domestic move towards abolition could be consolidated by an international commitment which could be achieved by Sierra Leone becoming a State Party to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.



**International Commission
Against the Death Penalty**

President

Navanethem (Navi) Pillay

Vice-Presidents

Ruth Dreifuss

Ibrahim Najjar

Members

Marc Bossuyt

Helen Clark

Marzuki Darusman

Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis

Tsakhia Elbegdorj

Hanne Sophie Greve

Sylvie Kayitesi

Ioanna Kuçuradi

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Martin J. O'Malley

Ivan Simonovic

Marta Santos Pais

Horacio Verbitsky

Honorary Members

Giuliano Amato

Louise Arbour

Robert Badinter

Mohammed Bedjaoui

Bill Richardson

Marta Vilardell

Federico Mayor Zaragoza

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

Founding Members

Rodolfo Mattarollo,
(1939-2014)

Asma Jilani Jahangir
(1952-2018)

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

Background

Composed of 24 Commissioners, who are persons of high international standing and who represent all regions of the world, ICDP acts with total independence and neutrality and works under its President Judge Navi Pillay.

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 rarely use the death penalty. ICDP works with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, governments, and nongovernmental organizations to further the abolition of capital punishments worldwide.

The work of ICDP is supported by a diverse group of 23 Member-States from all parts of the world who are committed to the abolition of the death penalty. Its Secretariat is based in Madrid.