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ICDP 01/2022

**International Commission
against the Death Penalty**

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Navanethem (Navi) Pillay

Vice-Presidents

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North-South Prize
of the Council of Europe

Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Papua New Guinea takes historic steps towards abolishing the death penalty

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission) warmly welcomes the vote of a bill to abolish the death penalty by the Parliament of Papua New Guinea on 20 January 2022. The historic vote follows the welcome announcement by Prime Minister James Marape who reportedly stated that he was commuting all the persons under sentence of death in his country with the aim of abolishing capital punishment. Reports reaching ICDP suggest that the Minister of Justice Bryan Kramer had said that the cabinet had made the decision to repeal the death penalty and replace it with life imprisonment without parole.

Capital punishment in Papua New Guinea was first introduced in 1907 and the last execution was carried out in 1954. The death penalty was never carried out since Papua New Guinea became independent in 1975. Capital punishment was initially abolished in 1974; though it was reinstated in 1991. However, no executions were carried out.

“I join ICDP Commissioners in congratulating Prime Minister Marape, his cabinet and the Parliament of Papua New Guinea for taking steps to move their country away from the death penalty towards its final abolition. We note with great appreciation Prime Minister Marape’s important justifications of his strong stance against the death penalty when he stated that capital punishment was “not an effective deterrent to serious crime” and its abolition was in line with “global trends and studies,” said ICDP President Navi Pillay.

As a follow-up, ICDP believes that this important domestic move towards abolition could be consolidated by an international commitment which could be achieved by Papua New Guinea becoming a State Party to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Furthermore, the Commission calls on Papua New Guinea to vote in favour of the United Nations General Assembly resolution on a moratorium of the death penalty, which is expected to take place in November and December 2022.

“I commend Prime Minister James Marape for his political leadership to ensure the better respect, protection and fulfilment of the fundamental human right to life in his country, which will have strong resonance in the international community. ICDP believes that this key development towards abolition of the death penalty in Papua New Guinea is an important step for the Oceania region as it moves closer towards becoming a death penalty-free region. Thanks to this historic decision by Papua New Guinea, worldwide abolition of the death penalty is today closer than ever before,” added President Pillay.



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Background

Composed of 24 Commissioners of high international standing following decades' long, highly respected experiences in public service and representing all regions of the world, ICDP acts with total independence under the leadership of President Judge Navi Pillay.

The Commission promotes the abolition of capital punishment in law in States that observe a *de facto* moratorium on the use of the death penalty and promotes moratoriums on executions in States that retain capital punishment. ICDP works with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, governments and nongovernmental organizations to advocate for worldwide abolition of the death penalty.

The work of ICDP is supported by a geographically diverse group of 23 Member-States who are committed to the abolition of the death penalty. Its Secretariat is based in Madrid and is responsible for the day-to-day work of the Commission.



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