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against the Death Penalty

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**Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Ghana parliament votes to abolish death penalty**

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) warmly welcomes the momentous vote by Ghana's parliament to abolish the death penalty. The vote, which removes the death penalty from the 1960 Criminal and Other Offences Act and the 1962 Armed Forces Act, was reportedly put forward by Member of Parliament Francis-Xavier Sosu and had the backing of the parliament's Committee on Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. The amendments will come into effect after the signature of President Nana Akufo-Addo. Currently, reports suggest that 170 men and six women face the death penalty. The last execution was carried out in 1993. Last year, seven people were reportedly sentenced to death in Ghana.

"I join my fellow Commissioners in extending our heartfelt congratulations to the Parliament of Ghana for this historic decision to abolish the death penalty," said ICDP President Navi Pillay. She added that "ICDP recognizes and commends all those people who believed in this cause, and who have tirelessly campaigned for this parliamentary vote. In 2019, I remember meeting President Nana Akufo-Addo in Accra and calling on him to lead his country to abolish the death penalty noting that in February 2001, he had, in his capacity as Minister of Justice, spoken publicly that he was against the death penalty. Noting his long-term support to end capital punishment, we call on President Akufo-Addo to sign the abolitionist amendments into law. Such a move, we believe, will lead to better respect, protection, and fulfilment of the fundamental right to life in Ghana."

The move to abolition appears to have been paved with Ghana voting in favour of the United Nations General Assembly resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty for the first time in December 2022.

Ghana's move towards abolition of the death penalty maintains an impressive momentum as reflected by many African countries, in recent years, having abolished capital punishment, including Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

**Background**

The International Commission against the Death Penalty is composed of 24 Commissioners of high international standing from all parts of the world, under the leadership of President Navanethem (Navi) Pillay, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. ICDP's work is supported by a group of 23 Member States from all regions of the world.

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 advocates for a moratorium 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 punishment worldwide. Its Secretariat is based in Madrid, Spain, and is responsible for the day-to-day work of the Commission.