



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

President

Navanethem (Navi) Pillay

Vice Presidents

Ruth Dreifuss
Ibrahim Najjar

Members

Marc Bossuyt
Helen Clark
Marzuki Darusman
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Federico Mayor Zaragoza
José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero
Marta Vilardell

Founding Members

Rodolfo Mattarollo
(1939-2014)
Asma Jilani Jahangir
(1952-2018)
Bill Richardson
(1947-2023)

Secretariat

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ICDP 11/2023

Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: ICDP mourns the passing away of Commissioner Governor Bill Richardson

It is with profound sorrow that the International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission) announces the passing away, on 2 September 2023, of ICDP Honorary Commissioner Governor Bill Richardson.

Commissioner Richardson was a founding ICDP Commissioner leading the Commission's work on the USA until 2021, when he became Honorary Commissioner. His work for ICDP reflected his deep passion, compassion, and commitment for the abolition of capital punishment, which underlined his legacy of historically leading the abolition of the death penalty in New Mexico during his tenure as Governor. In the USA, Commissioner Richardson engaged quietly with US Governors at crucial moments, when they were grappling with making decisions on abolishing the death penalty. He led ICDP delegations to meet Governors and Attorney Generals of four US states, to Delaware, to Japan, to the UN in New York to encourage UN Member States to support the UN General Assembly resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, to Qatar, all of which reflected his unwavering commitment to political leadership in abolition of the death penalty, justice, and human rights not just in the USA but also in other parts of the world. He also believed in the role of religious leaders in the abolitionist cause and was part of an ICDP delegation which had a personal meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican in December 2018.

"Commissioner Governor Bill Richardson's legacy was a tireless campaigner against the death penalty, and he used his own experience of abolishing capital punishment in his state of New Mexico to convince political leaders, senior diplomats, Civil Society Organizations of the importance of engagement, of listening and discussing and finding a way to bring an end to the outdated practice of the death penalty, which he highlighted always carried the possibility of executing an innocent person. His contributions to the cause of ending capital punishment will forever be remembered and cherished by ICDP and the global community. As we mourn the loss of Governor Bill Richardson, I join the Commissioners and the ICDP family in reflecting the indelible mark he left on the world, and we extend our heartfelt condolences to his family during this difficult time. His leadership, wisdom, and dedication to a world free of the death penalty will continue to inspire our work. Governor Richardson will be deeply missed, but his legacy of compassion and justice will endure," said ICDP President Judge Navi Pillay.

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.



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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.

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