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against the Death Penalty**

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Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: ICDP Receives the 2023 René Cassin Human Rights Award

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission) was honoured on 11 December with the prestigious 2023 René Cassin Human Rights Award (René Cassin Award) for its advocacy for the abolition of capital punishment worldwide.

ICDP Commissioner Marta Santos Pais, former United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative on Violence against Children, accepted the René Cassin Award, which was presented by Lehendakari Iñigo Urkullu and Councillor for Equality, Justice, and Social Policies Nerea Melgosa of the Basque Government. The award ceremony was held at the Palacio Villa Suso in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

In her video-recorded acceptance speech, ICDP President Judge Navi Pillay underscored the timeliness of this recognition noting that it took place on the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which she highlighted was a legacy of René Cassin, the person the Award is so aptly named after.

Commissioner Santos Pais, in her acceptance speech, reflected on the global context of vulnerability and threats to human rights while emphasizing that “there is still much to do” on the issue of capital punishment. She highlighted that some countries continued to sentence people to face the death penalty for crimes they had committed when they were below the age of 18 years faced the death penalty.

Lehendakari Urkullu underlined the shared commitment of the Basque Government to defending human rights upheld by the René Cassin Prize recipients and organizations that have received this honour over the past 20 years.

Following the official proceedings at Palacio Villa Suso in Vitoria, the ICDP delegation joined the hosts led by Lehendakari Urkullu in attending a special concert, which commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by the Basque National Orchestra at the Euskalduna in Bilbao.

The International Commission against the Death Penalty extends its profound gratitude to the René Cassin Prize jury, the Basque Government, and all our allies committed to the cause of human rights and the global abolition of the death penalty. This honour reinforces and inspires ICDP's steadfast dedication to its struggle to making the world, our world, free of capital punishment.

Background

The International Commission against the Death Penalty is composed of 23 Commissioners of high international standing from all parts of the world, under the leadership of President Judge 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.



North-South Prize
of the Council of Europe