



Madrid, 9 February 2024

ICDP 01/2024

**International Commission
against the Death Penalty**

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Founding Members

Rodolfo Mattarollo

(1939-2014)

Asma Jilani Jahangir

(1952-2018)

Bill Richardson

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Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: ICDP announces the passing of Commissioner Robert Badinter

It is with profound sorrow that the International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission) announces the passing away of our Commissioner Robert Badinter on 9 February 2024. Commissioner Badinter, who was one of ICDP's founding Commissioners, showed profound dedication to the abolition of capital punishment including leading the abolition of the death penalty in France when he was its Minister of Justice. He leaves behind an enduring legacy as a passionate, intellectual, inspiring advocate for abolition that continues to reverberate across borders and generations of current and future abolitionists.

Commissioner Badinter's life journey was shaped by an unwavering commitment to justice and human rights, in particular the abolition of capital punishment. His illustrious career spanned the spheres of academia, law, politics, human rights advocacy, literature. After graduating from the University of Paris and obtaining his MA from Columbia University, Badinter embarked on a distinguished legal career. His pivotal role as defence counsel in the Bontems case, where two men Claude Buffet and Roger Bontems were sentenced to death and executed, despite clear evidence of innocence of Mr Bontems. The execution, by guillotine, was witnessed by Commissioner Badinter and it, especially the execution of Roger Bontems, inflamed Commissioner Badinter's passionate determination to advocate for death penalty abolition.

During his tenure as Minister of Justice, France abolished the death penalty in 1981, marking a historic milestone in the fight for human dignity and justice. His leadership not only transformed France but also has served as a beacon of hope for abolitionist movements worldwide.

Following his tenure as Minister of Justice, Commissioner Badinter continued his crusade against the death penalty on the global stage. As a founding member of ICDP, as the author of important books like *L'Exécution*, *L'Abolition*, tirelessly advocated for the universal abolition of capital punishment, championing the cause of human rights around the world. His firm belief in the inherent value of every human life and his unwavering commitment to justice continue to inspire countless individuals and organizations dedicated to the abolitionist cause.

ICDP President Navi Pillay paid tribute that, "As we mourn the loss of Commissioner Robert Badinter, we pay tribute to his unparalleled legacy of compassion, leadership, dedication and inspiring activism. His vision of a world free of the death penalty will forever guide our efforts. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family during this difficult time. Though Commissioner Badinter may no longer be with us, his legacy will endure, inspiring us to continue the fight for justice and human rights, including the fundamental right to life."

In honouring the life and legacy of Commissioner Robert Badinter, ICDP reaffirms its commitment to continuing the struggle against the death penalty and thereby upholding the principles of justice, dignity, and human rights. His memory will



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forever be cherished, and his impact will continue to inspire future generations to carry on his legacy of advocacy for the universal abolition of the death penalty.

Background

The International Commission against the Death Penalty is composed of 22 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 24 Member States from all regions of the world. Its Secretariat is based in Madrid, Spain, and is responsible for the day-to-day work of the Commission.

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.



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