



Madrid, 26 June 2024

**International Commission
against the Death Penalty**

ICDP 09/2024

President

Navanethem (Navi) Pillay

Vice Presidents

Ruth Dreifuss

Ibrahim Najjar

Members

Barbara Lochbihler

Michelle Bachelet

Marc Bossuyt

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Founding Members

Rodolfo Mattarollo

(1939-2014)

Asma Jilani Jahangir

(1952-2018)

Bill Richardson

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Robert Badinter

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Secretariat

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Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Side-event in Geneva commemorating the 35th anniversary of the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of death penalty.

An ICDP delegation of the International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission) visited Geneva on 24 and 25 June 2024. The delegation was led by ICDP President Judge Navi Pillay, ICDP Vice President Ruth Dreifuss, ICDP Commissioners Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Marc Bossuyt, Marta Santos Pais and the ICDP Secretariat.

During this mission, ICDP held, in collaboration with Belgium, a well-attended Side-Event commemorating the 35th anniversary of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), aiming at the abolition of death penalty (Second Optional Protocol). This hybrid event took place on 24 June 2024 at the UN Palais des Nations in Geneva, on the side-lines of the 56th session of the UN Human Rights Council. The panel discussion was comprised of ICDP President Judge Navi Pillay, who presided the panel, Vice President Ruth Dreifuss, who moderated the discussion, Commissioner Marc Bossuyt, who drafted the Second Optional Protocol, Commissioner Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who, during her Presidency, led the abolition of the death penalty in the Philippines and her country to become State Party to the Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR. They were joined in person by Mr. Bernard Kouassi, Chef-de-Cabinet of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights of Côte d'Ivoire, who presented the experience of his country, as they became the newest Member State to accede to the Second Optional Protocol in May 2024; and Mr Simon Walker, Chief of Rule of Law and Democracy of the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR). Additionally, there were online interventions by the Ms. Botagoz Zhaxelekova, Vice-Minister of Justice of Kazakhstan, which ratified the Second Optional Protocol recently in March 2022, and Mr Mulilo Kabesha, Attorney General of Zambia, who made a commitment that his country would become a State Party to the Second Optional Protocol later this year. During the discussions, the participants aimed to raise awareness of the Second Optional Protocol from the perspectives of the drafter Commissioner Bossuyt, the different experiences of the Philippines, Côte d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan and Zambia, which could be the next State Party to the Second Optional Protocol in 2024.

During the visit, the ICDP delegation held a very productive bilateral meeting with H.E. Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights where there were discussions on the current global situation of the death penalty, identifying areas of collaboration and cooperation and a proposal by High Commissioner Türk to have closer ties with the formalization of a Memorandum of Understanding between the OHCHR and ICDP.

The ICDP delegation was hosted to a lunch by H.E. Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverwe with the participation of the Permanent Representatives of Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Zambia, Côte d'Ivoire and Suriname.



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The ICDP delegation led by Commissioner Marta Santos Pais held a productive meeting with Permanent Representatives from countries of Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Timor Leste representing the Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries (CPLP), with whom the Commission is working closely to identify steps to move the CPLP to become the world's first death penalty-free Community.

The delegation called on H.E. Mr. Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations and other organizations in Geneva.

Background

The International Commission against the Death Penalty is currently composed of 26 Commissioners of high international standing following highly respected careers in public service and representing all regions of the world. The Commission 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 Support Group of 24 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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