



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

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Navanethem (Navi) Pillay

Vice Presidents

Ruth Dreifuss

Ibrahim Najjar

Members

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Founding Members

Rodolfo Mattarollo

(1939-2014)

Asma Jilani Jahangir

(1952-2018)

Bill Richardson

(1947-2023)

Robert Badinter

(1928-2024)

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North-South Prize
of the Council of Europe

SARIA PREMIO

René Cassin

Madrid, 20 December 2024

ICDP 18/2024

Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: ICDP welcomes Zambia's ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission) warmly congratulates the Republic of Zambia on its historic step of depositing the instruments of ratification to become the 92nd State Party to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Second Optional Protocol), aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. The instruments of ratification to the Second Optional Protocol were deposited on 19 December 2024 at the United Nations in New York by Minister of Justice Hon. Princess Kasune. This important event was witnessed by ICDP Commissioner Ivan Šimonović, the former UN Assistant Secretary General and currently, the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the UN in New York.

"I would like to join my fellow ICDP Commissioners in commending Zambia making this important international abolitionist commitment, which we believe is a crucial follow-up to the abolition domestically for ordinary crimes in December 2022 and extending the abolition of capital punishment to security-related offences through the Defence (Amendment) Act No.12 of 2023 in December 2023. These steps has reinforced Zambia's commitment to respect, protect and fulfil the fundamental right to life and provides a powerful beacon of light and hope for the Southern African region, in particular, and Africa and the world, in general. Zambia is a true champion in the remarkable abolitionist trend in Africa," said ICDP President Judge Navi Pillay.

Additionally, Zambia changed its vote from abstention to voting in favour of the 2024 UN General Assembly resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty for the first time on 17 December 2024.

ICDP has closely supported Zambia in its efforts towards abolition, working in collaboration with key stakeholders, including then-Minister of Justice Hon. Mulambo Haimbe, now Minister of Foreign Affairs, and his successor, Minister of Justice Hon. Princess Kasune. In November 2024, an ICDP delegation led by Commissioner Sylvie Kayitesi met with Minister Kasune in Rome during an international meeting of Ministers of Justice organized by Community San't Egidio, further strengthening our cooperation. On 17 December, Commissioner Ivan Šimonović had a productive meeting with Minister Kasune on 17 December in New York, ahead of the submission of the instruments of ratification, to discuss Zambia's continued leadership in the global movement against the death penalty. Earlier, Zambia's Attorney General Hon. Mulilo Kabesha had, in his intervention at the high-level side event in Geneva commemorating the 35th anniversary of the Second Optional Protocol in June, promised that his country would become State Party to the Protocol by the year-end. He also had a very productive meeting with ICDP Commissioner Marc Bossuyt, the drafter of Second Optional Protocol.

Zambia's ratification of the Second Optional Protocol is a momentous milestone that not only reflects the country's commitment to human rights but also provides inspiration for other nations in Africa and beyond. ICDP remains committed to supporting Zambia and other countries in the region as they move away from the death penalty towards a world free of capital punishment.

Background

The International Commission against the Death Penalty is currently composed of 26 Commissioners of high international standing following highly respected careers in



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public service. The Commission acts with total independence under the leadership of President Judge Navi Pillay. The work of ICDP is supported by its Support Group of 24 Member States who are committed to the abolition of the death penalty. Both ICDP's Commissioners and Member States of its Support Group come from all regions of the world. ICDP's Secretariat is based in Madrid and is responsible for the day-to-day work of the Commission.

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.



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