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against the Death Penalty

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North-South Prize
of the Council of Europe

SARIA PREMIO

René Cassin

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ICDP 05/2025

Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Commissioner Marta Santos Pais participates in a discussion on the abolition of the death penalty at the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission) welcomes the thematic discussion on the abolition of the death penalty held by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (Committee of Ministers) on 12 March 2025 in Strasbourg, with the participation of ICDP Commissioner and former UN Special Representative on Violence against Children Marta Santos Pais.

In her intervention, Commissioner Santos Pais highlighted recent progress and the current situation of the death penalty in Europe and around the world, and underscored the importance of strengthening international cooperation to advance abolition efforts. She reaffirmed ICDP's strong commitment to advocacy and policy dialogue against the death penalty, with a particular focus on the lack of protection due to discrimination on the most vulnerable, including children. Commissioner Santos Pais focused in particular on the situation of the death penalty in Belarus, Japan, and the United States, emphasizing ICDP's ongoing work in these countries. She noted the persistence of capital punishment in these jurisdictions despite global trends toward abolition and reiterated ICDP's commitment to engaging with governments, parliaments, civil society, and other stakeholders to promote the end of this inhuman, irreversible and discriminatory punishment.

Commissioner Santos Pais and the ICDP Secretariat also held meetings with high level officials from the Council of Europe, further reinforcing their engagement in promoting a global moratorium on executions and the universal abolition of capital punishment.

ICDP expresses its appreciation for the Committee of Ministers for holding this important meeting, as well as for the leadership of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Director General on Human Rights and the Rule of Law and the Commissioner for Human Rights in expanding steady efforts aiming at the abolition of the death penalty in Europe and beyond. The Commission looks forward to further collaboration with the Council of Europe in achieving a world free from capital punishment.

Background

The International Commission against the Death Penalty is currently composed of 25 Commissioners of high international standing following highly respected careers in public service and human rights. ICDP's work is supported by a Support Group of 24 Member States who are committed to the abolition of the death penalty and, like the Commissioners, represent 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. Its Secretariat is based in Madrid and is responsible for the day-to-day work of the Commission.