



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

President

Navanethem (Navi) Pillay

Vice Presidents

Ruth Dreifuss

Ibrahim Najjar

Members

Michelle Bachelet

Marc Bossuyt

Helen Clark

Marzuki Darusman

Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis

Tsakhia Elbegdorj

Hanne Sophie Greve

Sylvie Kayitesi

Enda Kenny

Ioanna Kuçuradi

Barbara Lochbihler

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Dannel Malloy

Marta Santos Pais

Ivan Simonovic

Horacio Verbitsky

Honorary Members

Giuliano Amato

Louise Arbour

Mohammed Bedjaoui

Martin Joseph O'Malley

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

Marta Vilardell

Founding Members

Rodolfo Mattarollo
(1939-2014)

Asma Jilani Jahangir
(1952-2018)

Bill Richardson
(1947-2023)

Robert Badinter
(1928-2024)

Federico Mayor Zaragoza
(1934-2024)

Secretariat

Pl. Marqués de Salamanca 8

28006 Madrid, Spain

+00 34 91 3799458

info@icomdp.org



North-South Prize
of the Council of Europe

SARIA PREMIO

Rene Cassin

Madrid, 7 March 2025

ICDP 04/2025

Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: ICDP calls on South Carolina to halt the imminent execution by firing squad

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP or Commission) expresses its deep concern at receiving reports that an execution is going to be carried out by a firing squad for the first time in the United States (US) in 15 years. ICDP believes that the execution of 67-year-old Brad Sigmon by authorities in the US state of South Carolina is scheduled to take place on 7 March 2025 by firing squad.

Reports reaching ICDP suggest that planned execution of Mr Sigmon by firing squad will involve him being strapped in a chair with a basin built below it to catch his blood. A target will be placed on his chest and a bag over his head. Three volunteers hidden behind a curtain, to hide their identities, will then fire at him from a distance of 15 feet. The bullets used are designed to break apart on impact and cause maximum damage. After the shots are fired, a doctor will confirm Brad Sigmon's death. The state allows witnesses to observe the death from behind bulletproof glass.

"I join my fellow ICDP Commissioners in strongly calling on the authorities in South Carolina to halt the execution of Mr. Sigmon by the use of a firing squad, which is a cruel, inhumane and archaic method of execution that has no place in a modern justice system like the US. Moreover, reports suggest that Mr. Sigmon's difficult decision for the state to end his life by opting for this method was driven by his lack of confidence in South Carolina's lethal injection protocol, which remains shrouded in secrecy due to the state's shield law," said ICDP President Navi Pillay. "In this context, allowing an execution by firing squad only highlights the desperate search for alternative and no less painful execution methods—rather than reconsidering the fundamental use of the death penalty itself."

The decision of carrying out executions by using a firing squad is part of a broader and troubling pattern in the US, where some states are reviving or expanding execution methods. ICDP is alarmed by recent state-level developments, including Idaho's approval of executions by firing squad, Louisiana's authorization of nitrogen hypoxia, and Florida's push for mandatory death sentences for certain crimes.

The Commission also acknowledges recent positive developments at the state level, including North Carolina's commutation of 15 death sentences in December 2024, and ongoing bipartisan initiatives in the Ohio legislature to abolish the death penalty. Moreover, the landmark decision by a North Carolina judge on 7 February 2025 in a case brought under the state's Racial Justice Act underlined that race played a key role in the death penalty trial of Hasson Bacote, a Black man. The ruling followed after the presentation of extensive evidence of the systemic exclusion of Black jurors and racially disproportionate sentencing outcomes and highlights that racial bias affects the administration of the death penalty, including in North Carolina.

ICDP calls on South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster to stay the execution of Brad Sigmon. Reports indicate that Mr. Sigmon has been a model prisoner who has shown remorse and rehabilitation over more than two decades of incarceration.

The Commission further calls on authorities in South Carolina and the United States to move away from the death penalty towards abolition. There is no evidence that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other forms of punishment. It is a cruel, inhuman, and irreversible form of justice that disproportionately affects the most



**International Commission
against the Death Penalty**

President

Navanethem (Navi) Pillay

Vice Presidents

Ruth Dreifuss

Ibrahim Najjar

Members

Michelle Bachelet

Marc Bossuyt

Helen Clark

Marzuki Darusman

Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis

Tsakhia Elbegdorj

Hanne Sophie Greve

Sylvie Kayitesi

Enda Kenny

Ioanna Kuçuradi

Barbara Lochbihler

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Dannel Malloy

Marta Santos Pais

Ivan Simonovic

Horacio Verbitsky

Honorary Members

Giuliano Amato

Louise Arbour

Mohammed Bedjaoui

Martin Joseph O'Malley

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

Marta Vilardell

Founding Members

Rodolfo Mattarollo

(1939-2014)

Asma Jilani Jahangir

(1952-2018)

Bill Richardson

(1947-2023)

Robert Badinter

(1928-2024)

Federico Mayor Zaragoza

(1934-2024)

Secretariat

Pl. Marqués de Salamanca 8

28006 Madrid, Spain

+00 34 91 3799458

info@icomdp.org



North-South Prize
of the Council of Europe

SARIA PREMIO

René Cassin

vulnerable in society. The irreversible nature of the death penalty assumes great gravity, particularly given concerns over flawed legal processes as shown by the ruling by the court in North Carolina, limited access to clemency, and the risk of wrongful execution. The concerns on the death penalty has been recognised in the US with 23 states having abolished capital punishment and three states observing Governor-led moratorium on the death penalty.

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. The work of ICDP is supported by a Support Group of 24 Member States who are committed to the abolition of the death penalty. Like the Commissioners, the member States of ICDP's Support Group 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.