International Commission against the Death Penalty

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Secretariat
Pl. Marqués de Salamanca 8
28006 Madrid, Spain
+00 34 91 3799458
info@icomdp.org

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ICDP 20/2026

International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) Statement on the award of the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize to ICDP President Judge Navi Pillay

The Commissioners and Secretariat of the International Commission against the Death Penalty are filled with joy and pride at today's announcement that our President, Judge Navi Pillay, has been awarded the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize for her work to promote peace and international law.

We offer Judge Pillay our warmest and most heartfelt congratulations.

This recognition honours a life devoted to the conviction that justice is the foundation of lasting peace. From her early years defending opponents of apartheid in South Africa, to becoming the first woman of colour to serve on the country's High Court, to her historic work as a judge and President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, as a judge of the International Criminal Court, and as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Judge Pillay has shown again and again that the law can protect the most vulnerable and hold the most powerful to account.

Throughout this journey, one principle has remained constant: that every human being possesses an inherent dignity that no State may take away. It is no coincidence that the international tribunals she helped shape, confronting the gravest crimes imaginable, delivered justice without resorting to the death penalty. That example stands as a powerful answer to those who claim that justice requires taking a life.

At a time when international law is under severe strain and conflicts are tearing communities apart, this award sends a message of hope to all who believe that peace, human rights, in particular the fundamental human right to life, and the rule of law are inseparable. A world at peace is a world without executions. Today's honour strengthens our shared resolve to see the death penalty abolished everywhere, and inspires the many lawyers, activists, families, states and ICDP who are working towards that goal.

ICDP is deeply grateful for Judge Pillay's wisdom, courage and leadership. We look forward to continuing, under her guidance, our work towards a world free of the death penalty.

Background

The International Commission against the Death Penalty, established in 2010, is currently composed of 26 Commissioners of high international standing from all regions of the world, under the leadership of President Judge Navi Pillay, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. ICDP's work is supported by a geographically diverse Support Group

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of 24 Member States committed to the abolition of the death penalty. The Commission acts with total independence.

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 organisations, governments and non-governmental organisations 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.

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