



EUROPEAN UNION

PRESS RELEASE

Friday, 10 October 2014,

On the occasion of the European and World Day against Death Penalty

Today is the World Day against Death Penalty. It is also the European Day against Death Penalty.

The European Union and the Council of Europe have together reaffirmed their strong and absolute opposition to capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances, and their commitment to its worldwide abolition.

Death Penalty is against all the European Union stands for: our principles and values are about the promotion and protection of Human Rights which are universal and indivisible. The abolition of death penalty globally is one of the core objectives of EU's external policy and a personal objective of EU's High Representative / Vice-President Ashton.

No Member State of the European Union applies death penalty. This is a core requirement to become a member of the European Union. Death Penalty inflicts capital punishment that becomes irreversible even in the case of victims of judicial error. Moreover, data show that the believed Death Penalty's deterrent effect has not resulted in the decrease of the targeted crimes. The EU as a whole works relentlessly towards the abolition of death penalty, focusing as a first step on setting and keeping a moratorium in the countries that still retain death penalty.

While the overall trend towards the abolition of death penalty is positive, this year we note that the number of executions has increased worldwide, with breaches of moratoria, so we cannot be complacent in our efforts. Where death penalty still exists, we need to make sure that it is applied only for the most serious crimes, with guarantees of fair trial and sparing at least the youth and the mentally disabled.

We welcome Tanzania's continued de facto moratorium since 1995 and we continue calling for the abolition of death penalty in Tanzania. We also welcome recent steps taken by the African Union towards the adoption of an Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Abolition of Death Penalty.

We regret that Tanzania has not used the opportunity of the constitutional review process to move towards the abolition of death penalty and encourage her to consider this issue further in the next steps. We call on Tanzania to support the Resolution on a moratorium on the use of death penalty which will be put to vote at the 69th session of the UN General Assembly in December 2014.

Finally, we congratulate the Tanzanian civil society organizations working towards the abolition of death penalty in Tanzania for their relentless efforts of awareness raising and campaigning.

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Note to the Editor:

Background

Since gaining its independence, Tanzania has signed all the conventions relating to the protection of human rights within the framework of the African Union. It has also been a party to both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) since 1976. However, Tanzania has not signed/ratified the First and Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 15 December 1989, aiming respectively at the right of individual petition and the abolition of death penalty. The last death penalty in Tanzania was carried out in 1995. The approved draft Constitution retains death penalty for ordinary crimes, including murder and treason.

Tanzanian civil society organizations working towards the abolition of death penalty include the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), the Zanzibar Legal Services Centre, the Southern Africa Human Rights NGO-Network (SAHRINGON) Tanzania Chapter, the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) and the Coalition of Human Rights Defenders.

Facts about the death penalty:

- There is a worldwide trend towards abolition: between 1993 and 2013, the number of countries that abolished the death penalty by law for all crimes, grew considerably.
- In the course of 2013 four countries resumed executions.
- As of December 2013, 140 countries - more than 2/3 of the countries of the world - were abolitionist in law or practice.
- Of the current retentionist countries, in 2013, 22 countries/territories were known to have carried out executions and at least 6 to have imposed death sentences.
- The overall reported number of executions worldwide was 778, an increase of almost 15% compared with 2012, mainly due to a flux of executions in Iraq and Iran.
- At least 1.925 people were known to have been sentenced to death in 57 countries in 2013.
- At least 23.392 people were under sentence of death worldwide at the end of 2013.

Useful links

EU Death Penalty Guidelines

http://eeas.europa.eu/human_rights/guidelines/death_penalty/docs/guidelines_death_penalty_st08416_en.pdf

EIDHR Report *Delivering on the Death Penalty*

<http://www.eidhr.eu/files/dmfile/EIDHRDeliveringonDeathPenalty.pdf>

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