



PRESS RELEASE

WORLD DAY AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

Geneva, 10th October 2013. The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), the principal global civil society coalition against torture, calls on this 11th World Day Against the Death Penalty for a universal abolition of the death penalty.

Today, we continue to assist to a worldwide movement towards the abolition of the death penalty. A large majority of States have already abolished the death penalty or observe a legal or de facto moratorium. This trend has been confirmed since 2007 by the UN General Assembly, which has been calling for the establishment of a moratorium on executions in view to abolishing the death penalty. However, this trend should be harness to ensure greater compliance with international standards.

Since the beginning of the year, retentionist States such as China, Iran, Japan and the United States of America, have continued to resort to executions. 2013 has also witnessed some setback such as in Indonesia, a country that appeared to have been moving away from this practice in the last years.

The World Day is an opportunity to further raise awareness towards universal abolition. The message of this year World Day is that there is no convincing evidence that violent crime rates are linked to the application of the death penalty.

OMCT, a member of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, opposes the death penalty for all crimes under all circumstances. The death penalty is a negation of the most fundamental human right, the right to life, as stated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

OMCT further encourages addressing capital punishment in the light of the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment as a step on the road to universal abolition. In this regard, OMCT had welcomed the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on torture to the UN General Assembly in 2012 on the death penalty and the prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Among others, the dreadful conditions on death row inflict extreme suffering. Death row inmates around the world are held in appalling conditions, including where a moratorium is in place. In this regard, while calling for an immediate moratorium on the death penalty, the OMCT also urges States to give equally an emphasis on reviewing the inhuman and degrading detention conditions.

Finally, OMCT also wishes to highlight, on this particular day, the work of these individuals, families and organisations who fight against the death penalty often in very difficult conditions. OMCT urges States to ensure in all circumstances that these activists are able to carry out their legitimate activities without any hindrance or fear of reprisals.

Contact:

OMCT, Tel. +41 22 809 49 39

Email: omct@omct.org