

Joint Declaration of October 10, 2015

As we mark the World Day against the Death Penalty, we, Foreign Ministers, jointly call for a world which respects human dignity. The death penalty, a complex issue, continues to question the fundamental values of our societies and to challenge our respective understanding of criminal justice.

We respect the views of those who still support the use of the death penalty, and we believe that everyone has a right to be protected from violent crime. However, we consider that state executions have no place anymore in the 21st century. Modern justice systems must aspire to more than retribution.

The main objections to the death penalty are well known. Despite popular belief, there is no evidence supporting the claim that executions deter or prevent crime, including drug-related offenses - this year's World Day theme. No justice system can ever be guaranteed free from error, meaning that death sentences may cause the innocent to be put to death. Often, capital sentences are disproportionately imposed on poor, vulnerable and marginalised persons, aggravating discrimination against the weakest in society. Finally, capital sentences fail to provide victims of crime and their families with either commensurate compensation or with spiritual relief. State killing only results in more hatred and violence - the exact opposite of what modern justice systems should be trying to achieve.

This joint call, which we address to the world at large, is launched by Foreign Ministers of both abolitionist and non-abolitionist States. We recognize that exchange and cooperation are needed to move together towards more effective and more humane justice systems. Together, our countries have the experience and the drive to turn the death penalty into a sentence of the past. A vast majority of countries already supports worldwide death penalty abolition; we wish that all countries can soon join this trend.

Signed by the Foreign Ministers of the following countries:

Héctor Marcos Timerman (Argentina), Julie Bishop (Australia), Saliou Akadiri (Benin), Mauro Vieira (Brazil), Moussa Bédializoun Nébié (Burkina Faso), Manuel González Sanz (Costa Rica), Ratu Inoke Kubuabola (Fiji), Lener Renault (Haiti), Edgars Rinkēvičs (Latvia), Béatrice Jeanine Atallah (Madagascar), Claudia Ruiz Massieu (Mexico), Lundeg Purevsuren (Mongolia), Børge Brende (Norway), Albert Ferreros del Rosario (Philippines), Grzegorz Schetyna (Poland), José García-Margallo y Marfil (Spain), Didier Burkhalter (Switzerland), Feridun Hadi Sinirlioğlu (Turkey)