

Joint Declaration of October 10, 2014

As we mark the 12th World Day against the Death Penalty, we jointly call for a world which respects human dignity. The death penalty, one of the most complex and divisive issues of our time, continues to question the fundamental values of our societies and to challenge our 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 should not be taking place 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. 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, the capital sentence provides victims of crime and their families neither with commensurate compensation nor with spiritual relief. On the contrary, state killing 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 the first ever 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 hope that all countries will soon join this trend.

Signed by the following Foreign Ministers (countries):

Héctor Marcos Timerman (Argentina), Julie Bishop (Australia), Nassirou Bako Arifari (Benin), Djibrill Yipènè Bassolé (Burkina Faso), Duly Brutus (Haiti), José Antonio Meade Kuribreña (Mexico), Luvsanvandan Bold (Mongolia), Børge Brende (Norway), Albert F. del Rosario (Philippines), Didier Burkhalter (Switzerland), Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (Turkey), Philip Hammond (United Kingdom)