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Uzbekistan: Abolish the death penalty immediately

Amnesty International is calling on the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, to abolish the death penalty with immediate effect and to lift the secrecy surrounding the application of the death penalty. Uzbekistan, along with Belarus, are the last executioners in Europe and Central Asia.

This call follows a report that on 1 August 2005, the President Karimov, signed a decree abolishing the death penalty from 1 January 2008 and replacing it with imprisonment.

"While welcoming any step that leads to the abolition of the death penalty, Amnesty International urges the President of Uzbekistan to impose an immediate moratorium on death sentences and execution as a first step," Nicola Duckworth, Amnesty International's Europe and Central Asia Programme Director said.

"The Uzbekistani authorities must make public the names of people sentenced to death and awaiting execution as well as comprehensive statistics on the executions that have been carried out to date."

The flawed criminal justice system in Uzbekistan provides a fertile ground for judicial error. Amnesty International receives credible allegations of unfair trials, and widespread torture and ill-treatment, often to extract "confessions". Neither death row prisoners nor their relatives are informed of the date of the execution in advance, denying them a last chance to say goodbye. The body of the prisoner is not given to relatives for burial and they are not informed of the place of burial.

Amnesty International opposes death penalty in all circumstances in all countries around the world on the grounds that it is a violation of the right to life and that it is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

"As long as the death penalty is maintained, the risk of executing the innocent can never be eliminated" Nicola Duckworth said.

Background

One hundred and twenty countries -- more than half of the countries in the world -- have now abolished the death penalty in law or practice. Three countries a year on average have abolished the death penalty in the past decade.

Public Document

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