

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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OPEN LETTER TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF BURKINA FASO

23 June 2015,

Dear Council Members,

ADOPTION OF THE BILL TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY

We, the African sections of Amnesty International, committed to the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa, write to ask for your support in adopting the bill aiming to abolish the death penalty in Burkina Faso which was approved by the Conference of Presidents of the National Transitional Council (NTC) on 10 June 2015.

It is our understanding that the Council of Ministers will vote on the bill before it is sent to the NTC again for final adoption.

We oppose the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature or circumstances of the crime, the guilt, innocence or other characteristics of the offender or the method used by the state to carry out executions. Our opposition is based on the fact that the death penalty violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and it is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

We welcome your country's commitment to respect human rights and congratulate all national authorities for the progress made on the bill to abolish the death penalty in Burkina Faso. We encourage you to continue to support the process by urging you to vote in favour of the bill at the Council of Ministers.

The process towards abolition is the right step that will lead to Burkina Faso joining other African countries that have already abolished the death penalty. Seventeen countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have abolished the death penalty and progress in the region has been rapid. Over the course of the last twenty years, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Togo in West Africa, alongside Burundi, Gabon, Mauritius and Rwanda, have all abolished the death penalty for all crimes. Earlier in the year Madagascar became the latest country in Africa to abolish the death penalty for all crimes.

The world is moving away from the use of the death penalty. More than half of all countries in the world have abolished this cruel punishment and many more countries are abolitionists in practice. The abolition of the death penalty in Burkina Faso would be an important, internationally welcomed, achievement for the country.

The approval of the bill by the Council of Ministers will demonstrate the Government's commitment to promoting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of all in Burkina Faso. It will also send a strong signal to the national and international community that Burkina Faso has turned its back on a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

We hope you will give this matter the urgent attention it deserves.

Yours sincerely,

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Amnesty International Mali
Amnesty International Nigeria
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Amnesty International Sierra Leone
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