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Mongolia takes ‘vital step forward’ in abolishing the death penalty

The Mongolian parliament’s approval of a bill which aims to scrap the death penalty is a vital step towards full abolition of the death penalty in Mongolia, Amnesty International said today.

The bill, which ratifies the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) was approved today by a very large majority of MPs.

“The Mongolian parliament’s vote today is another vital step forward, and Mongolia should follow up by immediately implementing laws that abolish the death penalty altogether.” said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International Asia-Pacific Director.

“In moving away from the death penalty, Mongolia is setting the standard for other countries in the Asia-Pacific region to follow.”

Amnesty International has campaigned extensively for the abolition of the death penalty in Mongolia.

The death penalty remains part of the law in Mongolia until the Mongolian Parliament removes provisions in national legislation that still retain the death penalty.

The Mongolian Criminal Code currently provides for the application of the death penalty for offences including terrorism, genocide, rape, sabotage, premeditated murder and assassination of a state or public figure. Under these offences, 59 crimes are listed as capital crimes.

The country's Law on State Secrets and the Law on the List of State Secrets includes the use of the death penalty, which has made it difficult to find public information on its use in Mongolia.

Amnesty International was able to confirm 12 executions between 2005 and 2009.

On 14 January 2010, Mongolian President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj’s announcement of a moratorium on executions as a first step toward abolition of the death penalty was welcomed internationally.

More than two thirds of all countries in the world have abolished the death penalty in law or in practice.

More people are executed in the Asia-Pacific region than in the rest of the world combined. Fourteen countries in the region still retain the death penalty and have carried out executions in the past 10 years, with China far and away the largest executioner in the world.

Out of 41 countries in the Asia-Pacific, 17 have abolished the death penalty for all crimes, nine are abolitionist in practice and one – Fiji – uses the death penalty only for exceptional military crimes.

Background

Amnesty International holds that the death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and a

violation of the right to life as enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature or circumstances of the crime, the characteristics of the offender or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner.

On 6 December 2011 the Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network launched the report ***When Justice Fails: Thousands executed after unfair trials*** – please use the following link for the report:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA01/023/2011/en/103678e4-fa6f-4b1c-86a9-7d94e42b9494/asa010232011en.pdf>