

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: EUR 62/001/2008
News Service No:
Date: 08 January 2008

Uzbekistan abolishes the death penalty

Amnesty International welcomes the abolition of the death penalty in Uzbekistan from 1 January 2008 as a fundamental step in ending this cruel and inhumane practice worldwide.

Uzbekistan becomes the 135th country that has abolished the death penalty in law or practice in the world. Capital punishment has now been replaced in law with life or long-term imprisonment.

Amnesty International urges the authorities of Uzbekistan to honour its commitment as a member of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to “*make available to the public information regarding the use of the death penalty*”. Amnesty International is concerned that prior to the abolition of the death penalty relatives of executed prisoners have not been informed about the dates and places of their execution and burial. Therefore, the authorities should ensure that the families of those executed receive full access to such information and be allowed to collect the executed prisoners’ personal effects.

Amnesty International calls on the few remaining territories in the former Soviet Union which retain the death penalty to fully abolish it thus making the whole region a death penalty free zone. The only remaining executioner in Europe is Belarus where the last reported execution took place in December 2007.

Background

Uzbekistani President Islam Karimov issued a decree in August 2005 aimed at abolition of the death penalty from January 2008. In June 2006 the President had established a working group tasked among other things with preparing draft legislation replacing the death penalty with life imprisonment. Subsequently, a new law was adopted by the Uzbekistani Senate on 29 June 2007 which amended the Criminal, Criminal Procedure and Criminal Executive Codes by replacing the death penalty with life or long-term imprisonment. The law came into effect from 1 January 2008, marking the formal abolition of the death penalty in Uzbekistan.

See also:

Amnesty International’s statement, *Belarus: Amnesty International and Belarusian Helsinki Committee condemn reported execution* (AI Index: EUR 49/012/2007)

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/report/info/EUR49/012/2007>

Amnesty International’s briefing, *Commonwealth of Independent States: Belarus – the sole executioner* (AI Index: EUR 04/002/2007) <http://www.amnesty.org/en/report/info/EUR04/002/2007>

Amnesty International’s briefing, *Commonwealth of Independent states: Positive trend on the abolition of the death penalty but more needs to be done* (AI Index: EUR 04/003/2006)

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engeur040032006>