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Botswana: Latest execution a devastating blow to the right to life

The latest state-sanctioned execution of a 44-year-old man, Mooketsi Kgosibodiba, by hanging, is a devastating blow to the right to life in Botswana, Amnesty International said today.

The Botswana Prison Service announced the execution of Mooketsi Kgosibodiba through a statement on 2 December, saying that he was executed at the Gaborone Central Prison in the “morning”.

With this execution Botswana has continued on a regressive path, as the only country in Southern Africa that consistently executes people, bucking the regional and global trend towards abolition of the death penalty.

By signing Kgosibodiba’s death warrant, newly sworn-in President Mokgweetsi Masisi has missed an opportunity to immediately demonstrate strong leadership by rejecting the death penalty and respecting the right to life.

Justice is not served by executing people, and the world is moving away from this abhorrent and degrading form of punishment. There should be no space for the death penalty anywhere in the world.

Botswana must immediately establish an official moratorium on executions and take steps towards abolition in order to join 106 other countries that have abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

There is no credible evidence that the death penalty has a greater deterrent effect on crime than prison terms. The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment which should not be used in any circumstances.

Background

Mooketsi Kgosibodiba was convicted for the murder of his employer, Benjamin Makobela, in 2012. He was sentenced to death by the Francistown High Court in December 2017 and his appeal was dismissed by the Court of Appeal in July 2018.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature or circumstances of the crime; guilt, innocence or characteristics of the individual; or the method used by the state to carry out the execution.

The death penalty is the premeditated and cold-blooded killing of a human being by the state in the name of justice. It violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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