

**Steering Committee members:**

Amnesty International, Arab Coalition Against the Death Penalty, Collectif Unitaire National de Soutien à Mumia Abu-Jamal, Coalition nationale pour l'abolition de la peine de mort au Maroc, Community of Sant'Egidio, Death Penalty Focus, Culture pour la Paix et la Justice, Ensemble contre la peine de mort, International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, Fédération Syndicale Unitaire, International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture, Lawyers For Human Rights International, Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights, National Association of Criminal Defence Lawyers, Paris Bar, Penal Reform International, Puerto Rico Bar Association, Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty, Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, Tuscany Region.

**Other members:**

ACAT France, Advocates for Human Rights, American Friends Service Committee, Association for the Rights to Live, City of Andain, Association Marocaine des Droits Humains, Bahrain Human Rights Society, Belarusian Helsinki Committee, City of Braine l'Alleud, Centre for Prisoner's Rights, Centre marocain des droits humains, Coalition nationale tunisienne contre la peine de mort, Collectif des Organisations des Jeunes Solidaires du Congo-Kinshasa, Comité des Observateurs des Droits de l'Homme, Comitato Paul Rougeau, Comité Syndical Francophone de l'Education et de la Formation, Conférence Internationale des Barreaux, Congolese Youth Movement, Conseil National pour les Libertés en Tunisie, CURE, Death Watch International, City of Dijon, Federation of Liberal Students, Forum Africain contre la Peine de Mort, Forum 90 Japan, Forum marocain pour la Vérité et la Justice, Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, Hands Off Cain, Hope & Justice, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, HURILAWS, International Organization for Diplomatic Relations, Iranian Human Rights Activists Groups in EU and North America, Iraqi Alliance for the Prevention of the death penalty, Iraqi Center for Human Rights and Democracy Studies, Italian Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, Journey of Hope, KontraS, Law Student's Forum, Legal and Human Rights Centre, Lifespark, Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, Ligue ivoirienne des Droits de l'Homme, Lutte Pour la Justice, City of Matera, MEDEL, Mothers Against Death Penalty, Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples, National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, National Lawyers Guild, Nigerian Humanist Movement, Observatoire marocain des prisons, Observatoire National des Prisons, Ordine Provinciale dei Medici-Chirurghi e degli odontoiatri di Firenze, Ordre des avocats du Barreau de Liège, Ordre des avocats des Hauts de Seine, Ordre des Barreaux francophones et germanophones de Belgique, Organisation marocaine des droits humains, Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Pax Christi Uvira asbl, People of Faith Against the Death Penalty, Puerto Rican Coalition against the Death Penalty, RADHOMA, City of Reggio Emilia, Rights and Democracy, ROTAB, Stop Child Executions, Union Chrétienne pour le Progrès et la Défense des Droits de l'Homme, Unis pour l'abolition de la peine de mort, US Human Rights Network, City of Venice, Victorian Criminal Justice Coalition, Women's Information Consultative Center, World Organisation against Torture.

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**LIBERIA**

In view of the 9<sup>th</sup> Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP), would like to communicate several points concerning the situation of the death penalty in Liberia.

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP) gathers over 100 members: human rights organizations, professional associations and local authorities on the five continents which have united to campaign for the universal abolition of the death penalty. It was founded in 2002 in Rome. Its actions for 2010 include mobilizing abolitionist organizations around the world on the World Day Against the Death Penalty, a ratification campaign of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty and a campaign for the implementation of the UN moratorium resolutions. Several members of the WCADP are non-governmental organization with ECOSOC special consultative status.

**Death penalty**

1. There have been no executions in Liberia since 2000.
2. In September, 2005, Liberia signed and acceded to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 1 of the Protocol states: "No one within the jurisdiction of a State Party to the present Protocol shall be executed. Each State Party shall take all necessary measures to abolish the death penalty within its jurisdiction."
3. On July 16, 2008 Liberia's Senate passed a bill making armed robbery, terrorism and hijacking capital offenses if they result in death. Due to a sudden and monthly increase in armed robbery violence, there was growing public outcry and demand for government action. In the face of this opposition, political figures started to hold public and broadcasted hearings on the crime wave and the need to bring back the death penalty. The legislature justified its return on the basis that the legislature had never ratified the Second Optional Protocol and was not bound by the international obligations arising under this Protocol. On July 25, 2008, the bill was signed into law by the Liberian President.
4. On September 3, 2009, Mohammed Sundifu Sheriff, was sentenced to death by hanging for killing his two children in March 2008 in Tubmanburg, Bomi County, in Liberia. As of April 1, 2010, he was still on death row. Two other people were sentenced to death in 2009.

5. On March 19, 2010, Hans Williams and Madea Paykue were sentenced to death by the Circuit Court in Monrovia for the murder of 13 year-old Angel Tokpa in 2007. They were scheduled to be publicly hung on Friday, March 26, 2010 on a Monrovia City beach. The Court ordered the hangings to be public with the bodies left hanging until 6:00pm. An appeal filed with the Supreme Court of Liberia has stayed execution. The Williams and Paykue case raises deep concerns of the possibility of innocent persons being sentenced to death by a legal system intimidated by mob justice campaigns

6. The WCADP is deeply concerned by the reinstatement of the death penalty and by the possible resumption of executions in the near future in Liberia, which will result in a violation of its international commitment.

The WCADP urges Liberia to:

- a) Respect its international commitment not to execute;
- b) Commute the death sentence of Mohammed Sundifu Sheriff, Hans Williams, Madea Paykue and all death row inmates when the cases are properly before the Executive Branch of Government.
- c) Gain popular support for the abolition of the death penalty by informing the general public of Liberia that the death penalty is not an effective crime prevention tool and that its abolition will respect Liberia's existing international commitments;
- d) Promote in the Liberian Parliament the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol;
- e) Commit Liberia to a vote in favor of the UNGA Resolution which calls for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty in line with its accession to the OP2 - ICCPR. Liberia abstained in 2007 and 2008. The next vote will be in December this year. The previous resolution in 2008 attracted 106 votes in its favor which clearly shows increasing support for the end of the death penalty at an international level. This trend is particularly important in Africa where two additional countries abolished the death penalty in 2009 and where the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted in November 2008 a resolution calling on state parties to observe the moratorium on the death penalty.