

**118-20/CIDH/SE/GAB-MISC**

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty in Asunción, Paraguay, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty reiterate their unscathed commitment to abolish capital punishment.

As part of their campaign in favor of the ratification of international and regional protocols, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty strongly encourages States that have not yet done so, to become parties to treaties aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

The Americas have been a forerunner in the fight against the death penalty since Venezuela was the first modern country in the world to permanently abolish it in 1863 and Costa Rica the third, in 1877. Although several countries in the region are still considered retentionist, the USA has been the only country to execute people in the past 11 years. While the world focuses on saving lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we vehemently denounce the unfortunate rally of executions carried out by the US federal authorities since last July.

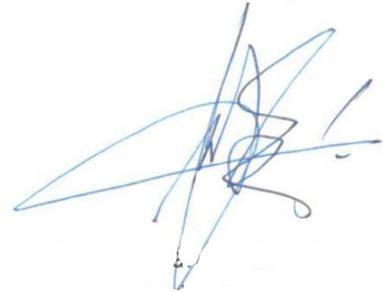
Adopted on June 8, 1990, the Protocol to the American Convention is now binding on 13 of the 35 States Parties to the Charter of the Organization of American States. We can do better than that. More than 70% of the countries in the world have abolished the death penalty in law or in practice, it is time for American countries to show a stronger support for the right to life. We are a stronger, safer, and more stable hemisphere without the capital punishment in our justice systems.

Proven to have no unique deterrent effect, discriminatory and cruel in its application, the death penalty has been used by some governments as a political tool against their own constituents. In other countries, capital punishment is disproportionately applied against the most vulnerable people because of their socioeconomic background, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Capital proceedings often violate the fundamental principles of fair trial, resulting in a disrespect for the rights of the defense and human dignity. Moreover, many crime victims' families oppose such inhuman retribution, which only keeps on the cycle of violence.

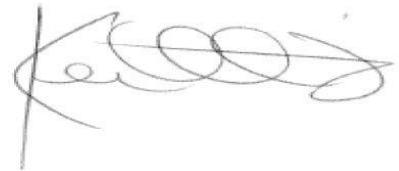
This October 10, 2020, the abolitionist movement will commemorate the 18th World Day Against the Death Penalty, which this year focuses on the right to effective legal representation at all stages of criminal proceedings. We invite all abolitionist consciences to defend this right, which makes it possible to limit the use of capital punishment, as a first step towards its end.

Above all, we call on all Member States of the the OAS that are yet to ratify it to begin the process of accession to the Protocol on its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, reaffirming the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights stand for the dignity of human life. Pending the universal

eradication of the death penalty, the Americas are called to strengthen its pioneering action for abolition.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and lines, positioned above the name of the signatory.

Commissioner Joel Hernández García  
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a prominent vertical stroke on the left and several horizontal loops, positioned above the name of the signatory.

Kevin Miguel Rivera-Medina  
World Coalition Against the Death Penalty  
President