



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

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Geneva, 9 January 2013

Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Sri Lankan woman executed today in Saudi Arabia

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) condemns today's execution of Rizana Nafeek, a Sri Lankan housemaid, in Saudi Arabia. She was beheaded in Dawadmi province near Riyadh.

Rizana, a teenage domestic worker, was condemned to death after a four-month-old baby boy she was bottle-feeding choked and died in 2005. According to her birth certificate she was only 17 years old when the baby died.

Rizana was charged with murder. She 'confessed' but later retracted the confession stating it was made under duress. She did not have legal representation until after she was sentenced to death in 2007. Riyadh's Supreme Court upheld the death sentence on 25 October 2010.

Rizana came from a poor family in Eastern Sri Lanka. She went to Saudi Arabia as a housemaid in 1995 and did not speak or understand Arabic.

Saudi Arabia is a party to the (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child which prohibits the imposition of the death penalty on persons who were under 18 years old at the time of the offence for which they were convicted.

"In carrying out this execution Saudi Arabia has violated not only international child rights but also failed to respect even minimum standards of fair trial" said Mr. Mayor, President of ICDP.

Despite numerous international appeals for clemency, the execution was carried out.

Federico Mayor
President of the International Commission
against the Death Penalty



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BACKGROUND

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) was founded in Madrid in October 2010. ICDP is composed of 14 personalities of high international standing from all regions of the world who act with total independence and neutrality and work under its President Mr. Federico Mayor.

ICDP opposes the death penalty under any circumstances believing that it violates the right to life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human rights. ICDP promotes the abolition of capital punishment in law in those states that observe a de facto moratorium on the use of the death penalty and promotes moratoriums on executions in states that rarely use the death penalty. In states that continue to carry out executions ICDP urges strict adherence to international standards.

ICDP works with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, governments and nongovernmental organizations to further the abolition of capital punishment worldwide.

The work of the ICDP is supported by a diverse group of 16 states from all regions of the world that are committed to the abolition of the death penalty. There is a small secretariat in Geneva.