

Senator Richard Gordon
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Resumption of the Death Penalty

Dear Senator,

As the Senate of the Philippines is about to consider draft legislation to reintroduce the death penalty, I appeal to you to do everything in your power to oppose the move and preserve the Philippines' good human rights record on abolition of the death penalty and the integrity of its international commitments.

The Philippines is a State Party to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, an international treaty that commits the country to the abolition of the death penalty. The adoption of legislation to reintroduce this punishment would not only violate the Philippines' obligations under the Protocol, but would also put into question how the authorities value the country's international obligations. It would adversely impact its track record of advocating for the commutation of the death sentences imposed on Filipino nationals abroad, such as overseas workers.

I oppose the death penalty unconditionally as a violation of human rights. It is an irrevocable punishment, imposed and administered through justice systems that can be vulnerable to discrimination and error. As of today, 142 countries in total are abolitionist in law or practice. The reintroduction of the death penalty would set the Philippines starkly against the global trend towards its abolition.

There is no conclusive evidence that the death penalty has a unique deterrent effect. Statistics from countries that have abolished the death penalty show that the absence of the death penalty has not resulted in an increase in the crimes previously subject to capital punishment, while evidence shows that punitive policies have little influence on the prevalence of drug use.

At a time of global pandemic when so much emphasis is rightly put on protecting people's lives, the pursuit of death in the name of justice is all the more troubling. We can live without the death penalty. I urge you to reject attempts to make the Philippines violate its international legal commitments.

Yours sincerely,

Copy to: Botschaft der Republik Philippinen
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Senator Panfilo Lacson
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