

DEATH PENALTY IN GHANA – MORATORIUM

Your Excellency,

Every year in April, Amnesty International launches a global report on death sentences and executions in the past year. The figures for 2018 show that the death penalty is firmly in decline and that steps are being taken across the world, and more particularly in Africa, to end the use of this cruel and inhumane punishment. Twenty countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have already abolished the death penalty for all crimes, seven of which are in West Africa. In 2016 the Constitutional Court of Benin effectively abolished the death penalty in a ruling that stated that “no one can now be sentenced to capital punishment.” In June 2018 Burkina Faso adopted a new penal code that abolished the death penalty and in February 2018 Gambia declared an official moratorium on executions.

Mr. President, this is clear evidence that the countries in the ECOWAS Sub-Region have made significant progress to either totally abolish the death penalty or to make legal changes towards this objective.

However, Ghana still retains the death penalty for crimes such as murder. According to Amnesty International’s current figures obtained from the Ghana Prison Service, the number of prisoners on death row stands at 172. Nevertheless, the country is considered abolitionist in practice by Amnesty International because it has not executed anyone in the last 25 years. Over the time, Ghana has already taken positive steps against the death penalty. These include the recommendations by the Constitutional Review Committee and the recommendation by Ghana’s Government for the abolition of the death penalty in its White Paper on the constitutional review.

We believe Ghana has a great opportunity now to show its commitment to human rights and maintain its position among countries that respect and promote human rights.

We therefore appeal to you to lead the move for the total abolition of the death penalty in Ghana by initiating the establishment of a moratorium on the execution of prisoners on death row!

Sincerely yours,

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