



NO JUSTICE WITHOUT LIFE

1st Asia Pacific Dialogue

on

Human Rights and Respect for the Dignity of Life

Manila, October 27-28, 2014

APPEAL TO ALL WOMEN AND MEN OF GOOD WILL IN ASIA PACIFIC REGION TO STOP THE DEATH PENALTY

1. We, women and men of different countries of the Asia Pacific Region, from different cultural, religious, ethnic, political backgrounds and traditions, gathered here in Manila for this 1st Asia Pacific Dialogue on “Human Rights and Respect for the Dignity of Life”.

We have lived special days here in in Mandaluyong, Manila, with fellow friends and activists, authorities, law enforcement and public officers, religious representatives, international institutions, from Italy, EU, Asia, the US, the United Nations, and we have been strengthened in the conviction that there is “No justice without life”.

2. Justice has at its roots the rationale of saving lives and to make life safer. Justice that kills is never justice. Justice that kills makes the state and society as low as the killers that wants to punish. We have always be, as human beings and as society different from those who for a terrible combination of factors may be guilty of heinous crimes.

When the states kills it reaffirms at the highest level that life, under special circumstances, can be taken away by a human hand. It legitimates a culture of death, while supposedly wants to make life safer and highlight the value of life. The death penalty does not make the life of citizens safer because puts death in the center, and inaccurately chooses among many who put to death or make to live.

3) This is why we say that it must be heard the request of the majority of countries in the world that have adopted a Resolution at the UNGA calling for a universal moratorium on executions. We ask our governments and the governments of the world to be pro-active in supporting and implement this Resolution.

The death penalty does not bring closure to the victims’ families, who are made to stay in a limbo without forgiveness, in sorrow, for many years to come after the loss of their beloved. The death penalty always creates new victims, that are the children, the relatives of the people sentenced to death, who did not commit anything but often having a hard life, and are accompanied for all their lifetime by social stigma. The death penalty is too often at risk of putting to death innocent people, as the DNA studies and more and more cases in different parts of the world show. Perfect justice does not exist. Nobody can

take away what cannot be given back, To take away lives is an irreparable mistake.

4)The death penalty is not a deterrent, because perpetrators often are people who deal with death more than with life and are not scared by any death. No statistics in the world shows that the death penalty can be a deterrent, on the contrary it may encourage acts of violence against law enforcement people even inside prisons because no hope is on sight and no rehabilitation permitted. The death penalty disproportionately hits social social, religious, ethnic minorities, And has been used too often to eliminate political opposition depicting heroes as criminals.

5)Many of us, from different cultures and religions, deeply think that life is sacred and it is not in human hands. Tonight we feel and deeply hope that a new day id beginning for Asia Pacific Region, and to reach the four corners of the earth: the new dawn of more humane and righteous world, a world without the death penalty!

Each one can become an active worker in the construction of a world without the death penalty. As “builders of life” that is the basis of peace.

6)Nelson Mandela, from the dock at the culmination of the Rivonia Trial in April 1964 said: "During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony with equal opportunities, a society without capital punishment. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to see realized. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

We thank a great spiritual leader as Pope Francis who just asked us, every christian and every person of good will, to do all what is possible to abolish on earth the death penalty and to work to humanise life in prison, never humiliating human dignity. We commit ourselves to this. We will work as an Asia Pacific Region network to reach this goal. We, as young people, professionals, people with responsibility commit ourselves to make this dream reality and to live, work and pray for the world sooner be a world without death penalty, always respecting human degnity, always believing in rehabilitation of human beings. Yes: NO JUSTICE WITHOUT LIFE!

Manila, October 28th, 2014