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Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship



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*Permanent Mission of Rwanda
to the United Nations*

SAVE THE DATE

OHCHR Global Panel: “Moving Away from the Death Penalty – The Voices of Victims’ Families”

Side event at the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
Conference Room 3, United Nations Headquarters, New York,
29 September 2015, 3pm – 5pm

Welcome

- **Mr. Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Introductory remarks

- **H.E. Mr. Paolo Gentiloni**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy
- **H.E. Mr. Héctor Timerman**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship, Argentina
- **H.E. Mr. Saliou Akadiri**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Benin
- **Honorable Ratu Inoke Kubuabola**, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Fiji
- **H.E. Mrs. Louise Mushikiwabo**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Rwanda

Moderator

- **Mr. Philip G. Alston**, John Norton Pomeroy Professor of Law, New York University School of Law

Participants

- **Mr. Robert Curley**, Massachusetts, USA, murder victim’s father
- **Ms. Mireya Garcia Ramirez**, former Vice-chair of the Chilean Association of Relatives of detained and Disappeared Persons in Chile
- **Sister Helen Prejean**, Ministry Against the Death Penalty and founder of SURVIVE, a support group for victims’ family members

Open discussion

Closing remarks

- **H.E. Mr. Laurent Fabius**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development, France

Background

There is a widespread assumption that victims’ families believe that only the death penalty can provide justice. But this is not accurate. Often murder victims’ families believe the death penalty is harmful and interferes with a difficult healing process, a process that is exacerbated by long delays, a decrease in actual executions, and a belief that responding to one killing with another does not honour the victim. In addition to the trauma suffered by family members and the family of the condemned inmate, there are adverse effects of executions on third parties such as judges, jurors, judicial staff, prison staff, journalists, clergy and spiritual advisors. These are intangible emotional and psychological costs that should be taken into consideration in weighing the costs of the death penalty.

OHCHR, in cooperation with the **Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Italy, Argentina, Benin, Fiji, France and Rwanda**, is continuing its series of ‘knowledge events’ on the death penalty with a global panel event on the death penalty and the voices of victims’ families in the death penalty debate. The objectives of the panel are to share experiences from persons intimately involved in decisions as to whether justice means the ultimate punishment – execution.

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