In view of the 7th Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP), would like to communicate several points concerning the situation of the death penalty in El Salvador.

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP) gathers 96 members: human rights organizations, professional associations and local authorities on the five continents who have united to campaign for the universal abolition of the death penalty. It was founded in 2002 in Rome. Its actions for 2009 and 2010 include the World Day Against the Death Penalty, a ratification campaign of the United Nations Protocol aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, a campaign for the implementation of the UN moratorium resolution, and the preparation of the 4th World Congress against the Death Penalty.

Death penalty

1. There has been no execution in El Salvador since 1973 and the death penalty was abolished for ordinary crimes in the Constitution in 1983. Article 27 of this Constitution states that “The death penalty may be imposed only in cases provided by military laws during a state of international war”.

As the constitution of a given country is the reflection of the supreme values of this country, those who have restricted the use of the death penalty in their constitution demonstrate the importance they give to this decision.

Furthermore, El Salvador has showed its involvement against the capital punishment by voting in favor of the two resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly about a moratorium on the use of the death penalty (resolution 62/149 and 63/168) and by being a co-sponsor of the resolution 63/168 adopted at the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 2008.

2. However, El Salvador has not ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. This Protocol is extremely important because it is the only international treaty of worldwide scope to provide for total abolition of the death penalty. The adoption of this Protocol also has a symbolic value: it shows the universal trend towards the abolition of the death penalty, which is considered as a violation of the right to life. It is of utmost importance that all abolitionist countries in the world ratify this Protocol.
3. The WCADP thus urges El Salvador to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

It also encourages El Salvador to abolish the death penalty for all crimes, including in times of war.