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World Day Against the Death Penalty 2024 - Avocats Sans Frontières France in Partnership with NHRC and LEDAP Convenes a Technical Consultation on the Death Penalty for Key Stakeholders

Every year, on October 10th, the global abolitionist movement unites for the World Day Against the Death Penalty. This day mobilizes civil society, political leaders, lawyers, and the general public to advocate for the universal abolition of capital punishment. Avocats Sans Frontières France (ASF France) strongly opposes the death penalty in all cases and without exception. The death penalty is a blatant violation of the fundamental right to life, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The 2024 theme, "The Death Penalty Protects No One," is dedicated to fighting the misconception that the death penalty can make societies safer and recalls that there is no conclusive evidence of the deterrent value of the death penalty. Instead, the death penalty is an irreversible act of cruelty that undermines justice, especially as it disproportionately affects disadvantaged populations, including the poor and marginalized.

Though Nigeria has made progress by refraining from executions since 2016, hundreds remain on death row, highlighting the pressing need for sustained advocacy. ASF France urges the government to establish an official moratorium on executions as a crucial step towards the complete abolition of the death penalty. To mark this year's World Day Against the Death Penalty, ASF France in partnership with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the Legal Defense Assistance Project (LEDAP) convened a technical consultation with key justice sector stakeholders, including government officials, institutions, policymakers, legal practitioners, and human rights advocates. This consultation provided a platform for strategic engagement on how Nigeria can transition towards a justice system that values reformative and restorative approaches over retribution.

Speaking at the event, the Country Director of ASF France in Nigeria, Mrs. Angela Uzoma-Iwuchukwu reiterated the organization's stance: "The death penalty has no place in a modern and progressive justice system. It is not only a violation of the right to life but also an ineffective tool for justice. We urge the Nigerian government to join the 27 African countries that have completely abolished the death penalty and work towards a more just society". The Australian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Ms. Leilani Bin-Jude PSM also said "Australia opposes the death penalty in all circumstances. The death penalty only perpetuates a cycle of violence and should be abolished all over the world". The Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of France to Nigeria, Jean-François Hasperue in his remarks said "the theme of this year's event says it all; the death penalty protects no one, emphasizing the fact that the death penalty does not serve as a deterrent and is an ineffective tool for justice.

The event also featured a panel discussion on the legal and ethical challenges of the death penalty. Panelists; Angela Uzoma-Iwuchukwu, Ogechi Ogu; Founder / E.D of Public Awareness on the Rights and Rehabilitation of Vulnerable Persons (PARRVP) and Joseph Otteh; Executive Director of Access to Justice emphasized the ineffectiveness of the death penalty, fundamental arguments against the death penalty and the need for sustained momentum and collaboration among all stakeholders to work towards its abolition.

Signed –
Angela Uwandu Uzoma-Iwuchukwu
Country Director, ASF France in Nigeria

For further enquiries please contact:
ASF France Communication Officer, Nigeria
+234 (0)7013286982 | communication.nigeria@avocatssansfrontieres-france.org