

Avocats Sans Frontières France, Amnesty International and Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort (ECPM) Urges Ogun State Government to Uphold the Right to Life and Abandon Plans to Carry Out Executions

Avocats Sans Frontières France (ASF France), Amnesty International Nigeria and Ensemble contre la peine de mort – ECPM (Together Against the Death Penalty) are deeply concerned about recent reports that the Ogun State Government is considering signing death warrants for condemned criminals as a response to rising crime rates. We strongly urge the Ogun State Government to refrain from taking such irreversible measures and to explore alternative approaches to addressing crime within the state.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations in 1948, affirms in Article 3 that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.” The implementation of the death penalty directly contravenes this fundamental principle and undermines global progress toward the abolition of capital punishment. ASF France emphasizes that every human life holds intrinsic value, and justice systems must reflect this commitment to human dignity and fairness.

Empirical evidence from around the world has consistently shown that the death penalty does not serve as an effective deterrent to crime. Countries that continue to implement capital punishment have not experienced a significant reduction in crime rates. On the contrary, many such nations still face persistent surges in violent crimes. This reality underscores the ineffectiveness of the death penalty as a means of achieving justice or ensuring public safety. Moreover, the application of the death penalty is fraught with risks of judicial errors, socio-economic and racial biases, and violations of due process rights. These flaws make the death penalty an inherently unreliable and unjust punishment, further justifying its abolition.

We firmly believe that rather than resorting to punitive measures such as capital punishment, the Ogun State Government should prioritize evidence-based strategies that tackle the root causes of crime. Sustainable solutions lie in improving socio-economic conditions, expanding access to quality education and employment opportunities, and strengthening the criminal justice system to uphold fairness, transparency, and accountability. By addressing these underlying factors, the government can create a more just and secure society, fostering long-term crime prevention rather than relying on extreme punitive approaches.

We commend the growing global movement toward the abolition of capital punishment, with over 70% of countries worldwide, including 28 in Africa, abolishing the death penalty in law or practice. Nigeria has effectively entered a moratorium on executions, with no recorded implementation of the death penalty since 2016. This reflects a growing national commitment to respecting the right to life and aligning with global trends. Ogun State has the opportunity to reinforce this progress by refraining from signing death warrants and championing restorative justice. Such a stance would bolster Nigeria’s international image and contribute to a more humane, rights-respecting legal system.

ASF France, Amnesty International Nigeria and Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort (ECPM) have been working to reform the use of the death penalty in Nigeria by advocating for more humane justice policies and ensuring fair legal representation for individuals facing capital punishment.

Signed – Avocats Sans Frontières France, Amnesty International and Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort (ECPM)