



**Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme**

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE NON GOUVERNEMENTALE AYANT STATUT CONSULTATIF AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES, DE L'UNESCO,  
DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE ET D'OBSERVATEUR AUPRES DE LA COMMISSION AFRICAINE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DES PEUPLES

International Federation  
for Human Rights

Federación Internacional  
de los Derechos Humanos

الغدرالية الدولية لحقوق الانسان

## Open Letter

To Mr Shi Mao-Lin, Minister of Justice of Taiwan

### Abolish the death penalty now !

Paris, 9 October 2006

Copies to: Mr Weng Yueh-sheng, President of Judicial Yuan  
Mr Wang Jin-pyng, President of Legislative Yuan

Dear Minister,

On the occasion of the World Day Against the Death Penalty, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) renews its call for the authorities in Taiwan to take the final steps towards abolition of the death penalty.

Since 2000, the Taiwan government has repeatedly declared that the abolition of the death penalty is one of its core political goals. Indeed, this statement was reiterated to the FIDH mission delegates who met with the President Chen Shui-bian, yourself, and other members of the Taiwan government in September 2005, and again at the time of the release of the joint FIDH/Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty (TAEDP) report "The Death Penalty in Taiwan: Towards Abolition?" in Taipei, in June 2006. FIDH welcomes these commitments and the willingness of the authorities to engage in dialogue with civil society on this issue.

FIDH welcomes the fact that, in accordance with this policy, the number of executions carried out in Taiwan has been declining each year, and that, so far, in 2006 no executions have taken place. This encouraging pattern has raised expectations and hope throughout the international community that Taiwan will join the world movement towards abolition. FIDH takes this opportunity to urge you and your administration to demonstrate the strength of the commitment to abolition of the death penalty by ensuring that no executions are carried out this year.

FIDH notes the recent positive steps taken in relation to prisoners held on death row. Indeed, FIDH notes that since the release of the FIDH/TAEDP report, the Judicial Yuan has agreed that the Legal Aid Foundation should be tasked with defending those on death row and that it has started providing legal assistance to those facing imminent execution. Furthermore, FIDH notes that in response to recommendations made by FIDH and TAEDP to cease the practice of shackling prisoners, in accordance with international law, the Taiwan government has taken some initial steps to raise the issue of conditions of detention with the prison authorities. FIDH encourages the government to pursue this issue without delay in order to bring about concrete improvements and ensure that the cruel, inhuman and degrading practice of shackling has no place in Taiwan's prisons.

These measures begin to address some of the areas of serious concern in the administration of criminal justice, which were identified by FIDH in its 2006 report. However, FIDH remains deeply

concerned that the government has not taken further concrete steps towards the abolition of the death penalty. FIDH reiterates its call for the Taiwan government to take urgent measures towards full abolition, firstly by committing publicly to a timetable for abolition, and secondly by adopting a moratorium on executions with immediate effect.

FIDH strongly believes that abolition is both an obligation and an opportunity for Taiwan. By abolishing the death penalty, Taiwan would stand to gain increased recognition from the international community as a modern democratic state, and would set an example for the entire region.

I look forward to receiving your response to the issues raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

**Sidiki Kaba**  
**FIDH President**

**Siobhan Ni Chulachain**  
**FIDH Vice President**