

Date : ..... 2020

President of the Republic of Belarus  
Mr. Alyaksandr Lukashenka  
Vul. Karla Marksa, 38  
220016 Minsk  
**Belarus**

Dear Mr. President,

As members/supporters of ACAT-Switzerland, the Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture and the Death Penalty, we are writing to you on the occasion of the forthcoming

**10<sup>th</sup> of October, the World Day against the death penalty.**

The death penalty constitutes the ultimate and most cruel of all punishments and ill-treatments and is proven not to produce any deterrent effect. Whereas worldwide there is a broad trend towards the abolition of the death penalty, Belarus is the only country in Europe to retain it. Moreover, the Belarusian practice of not letting the convicts know the time of their execution until the last moment, and denying the family the right to know their place of burial, constitutes additional cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment violating the ICCPR and the UN Convention against Torture, both ratified by the Republic of Belarus. Belarus has expressed several times its intention to decree a moratorium on the death penalty.

The case of **Stanislau and Illia Kostseu** allows the realization of such a step. On 22 May 2020, the Supreme Court upheld the death sentences imposed on these two young Belarusian brothers, who have now applied for clemency as their last chance. The murder they committed is a very serious crime. Stanislau and Illia have however expressed their deep regret and cooperated fully with the criminal investigation. Their young age and the difficult circumstances of their upbringing have undoubtedly influenced their act and should be considered as mitigating factors. Stanislau and Illia Kostseu are the youngest prisoners to have been sentenced to death in Belarus for over ten years. Their execution would be a terrible stain on Belarus' record.

**We therefore urge you, dear Mr. President:**

- **to order the immediate implementation of a moratorium on the death penalty in Belarus;**
- **after the implementation of a moratorium, to seriously consider abolishing the death penalty in all circumstances, or at least in time of peace, and to gradually sign and ratify the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (OP 2 – ICCPR).**
- **to commute the death penalty imposed on Stanislau and Illia Kostseu as a gesture of compassion;**
- **to lift the secret surrounding executions for all pending cases and disclose the place of burial to the families of those executed in the past to allow families to visit the tomb of their beloved ones.**

We thank you for the attention given to this concern.

|    | First and last Name | Address | Signature |
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**Copy: Embassy of the Republic of Belarus, Quartierweg 6, P.O. Box 153, 3074 Muri b. Berne**

*ACAT-Switzerland is a politically neutral and independent human rights organization affiliated to the International Federation of ACAT (FIACAT), which has consultative status with the United Nations and participative Status with the Council of Europe.*