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Taiwan justice minister resigns over death penalty dispute

Amelia Mathias at 2:03 PM ET 2010/03/12

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[JURIST] Taiwanese Justice Minister Wang Ching-feng [official profile] resigned Thursday in defense of her position against the death penalty. Though Taiwan has not executed a criminal since 2005, Wang said she would not sign [BBC report] the execution warrants of any of the 44 prisoners [Taiwan News report] still on death row. Her resignation was sparked by possible criticism [Reuters report] of her position by the office of Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou [JURIST news archive], a member of her own Kuomintang party. Three-fourths of Taiwanese citizens favor the death penalty. Taiwanese Premier Wu Den-yih has already appointed a replacement [CNA report].

In February, UN Under-Secretary-General <u>Sergei Ordzhonikidze</u> [official profile] praised the <u>increase in the number of countries</u> [JURIST report] that have suspended or abolished the death penalty. Speaking at the <u>4th World Congress Against the Death Penalty</u> [FIDH backgrounder] in Geneva, Ordzhonikidze expressed hope that countries that have not abolished the death penalty would adopt the 2007 <u>UN Resolution 62/149</u> [text], placing a moratorium on the use of capital punishment.

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