

FINAL EVALUATION

Progressive abolition of the death penalty and alternatives that respect international human rights standards (EIDHR2009167 880)

Implemented by Penal Reform International (PRI)

Funded by the European Union under the European Instrument for democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

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1. Introduction

The project, “Progressive abolition of the death penalty and alternatives that respect international human rights standards” was funded by the European Union under the European Instrument for democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), and had a budget of €1,417,985. It commenced on 1 February 2010 and ended on 31 March 2012.

This project represents a second phase of death penalty work funded by the European Commission for PRI. The first phase covered the period February 2007 to January 2009. A continuation of the programme is being sought for a third phase to tentatively cover the period 2012 to 2014.

The programme of work covers 17 countries across five regions: **Middle East and North Africa** (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia); **Eastern Europe** (Belarus, Russia and Ukraine); **South Caucasus** (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia); **Central Asia** (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan); and **East Africa** (Kenya and Uganda).

The original project description included Rwanda and Burundi (which were replaced with Kenya and Uganda), the United Arab Emirates (which was replaced with Bahrain) and Yemen. Following political difficulties, and in agreement with the donor, Bahrain and Yemen were subsequently dropped as project countries in December 2011.

The project has been implemented through PRI’s regional offices based in **Astana, Amman, Moscow** and **Tbilisi**. The East African portion of the project has been implemented by PRI’s partner **Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI)** based in Kampala, Uganda (www.fhri.or.ug). Media work has been implemented by PRI’s partner **Inter Press Service (IPS)** (<http://ipsnews.net/deathpenaltyabolition/>). The project has been overseen by a dedicated Project Manager based in PRI’s head office in London.

The agreed purpose of the evaluation is:

- A. assist PRI and partners continue their works based on a process of learning and improvement; and
- B. review the effectiveness and quality of investment in delivering change.

The questions were prepared to:

- prompt discussion;
- elicit opinion; and
- draw analysis based on experience.

The questions were not specifically designed to deliver quantitative data, though answers and opinion that could be evidenced by documented data were important. Nor is it a checklist of things that have been done in comparison to the project proposal and contract.

In support of the purpose of the evaluation, as above, the agreed key areas for assessment focused on:

- management (PRI performance);

- quality and effectiveness of activities (were they the right activities and were they done well); and
- impact (what is different as a result of the project).

The evaluation used key stakeholders and participants of the project, identified by PRI or FHRI, except in Kenya where time allowed for the consultant to use some of his own contacts.

The evaluation was implemented to be used alongside the final narrative reports which will cover specific comments on performance against log frame indicators, however, the evaluation questions were designed to be able to draw upon the log frame indicators to deliver a mutually reinforcing commentary for the final narrative report.

The evaluation for the project ran from the middle of February to the end of May 2012. The questionnaire and inception report were agreed between the consultant and PRI in February. The inception report and questionnaire were sent to partners and regional offices in advance of any meetings to allow ample time for translation where required and circulation. Visits were made to Berlin to meet IPS, Uganda to meet FHRI and project stakeholders, Kenya to meet with project stakeholders and Russia and Jordan to the PRI regional offices and to meet with project stakeholders. Meetings were either individual or group. Interviewees were informed the default position was that all responses would be treated as non-attributable. Interviewees were sent draft notes of the meetings and given a chance to correct, clarify and confirm. Questionnaires focusing on the quality of project activities, the quality of PRI's work and changes as a result of the project, were completed by project stakeholders from Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. The evaluation was better placed to assess progress of activities implemented at a national and regional level. The information, experience and opinion derived from direct interaction with stakeholders was more revealing than questionnaires and those interviews conducted through video calls.

During the course of the evaluation visits, it was clear that access to places of detention was not going to be possible. While this is disappointing it is highly usual. Organisations like PRI and FHRI have most impact because of their good relationships with national prison services, pressurising prison services for one of access, could be counter productive and possibly be a hindrance in future activities. It was also very clear that stakeholders and participants, other than PRI, did not see the activities and change in the language of the log frame. It was the judgment of the consultant, in the interest of gaining unfettered experiences from those involved, not to obfuscate with insistence on a certain type of terminology that tied discussions to the log frame indicators.

In the report, I use the term 'partner' for those contractual partners, 'participant' for those directly involved in project activities and 'stakeholder' for those who work in, or with, the criminal justice system but may not have been directly involved in the project activity.

The evaluation would not have been possible without the time and openness of those who I met or who completed questionnaires. I am very grateful to FHRI and Doreen Namyalo Kyazze for facilitating my work in Uganda and Kenya and accompanying where possible during the meetings. I also thank the staff of the PRI offices in Jordan and Moscow for interrupting their extremely busy schedules, hosting me so kindly,

providing their insight and offering excellent practical and logistical support, the staff of PRI offices in Astana and Tbilisi for ensuring the questionnaires were translated and completed, and the staff of PRI in London who provided feedback and comments on the report. Finally I am extremely grateful to the Jacqueline Macalesher, Project Manager, PRI whose diligence and patience made the evaluation possible and ensured it reached it necessary conclusion.

The opinions in the report are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of Penal Reform International.

Paul English
Monday, 18 June 2012

2. Executive Summary

“There were no discussions on the issues of the death penalty before [the project]. After the project started the community began to talk about the death penalty and its complete abolition.”¹

The project was hugely ambitious, complex and implemented in a time of almost unprecedented political and social change in the recent history of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

The project combines mutually reinforcing and innovative activities and built upon old and new alliances. There are a number of key successes, and where progress deviates from the project plan, influences beyond the project control are largely the cause.

The project has directly contributed to and directly inspired concrete steps towards the reduced use of the death penalty in national contexts and to a degree thoughtful and progressive consideration of alternatives to the death penalty.

The project management and implementation was of the highest order and activities were delivered to a very high standard. Partnerships were well run and project participants and stakeholders were unstinting in their praise for PRI substantive output and approach.

“The work of PRI was outstanding.”²

Key Observations

- Valuable progress was made on the six specific objectives of the project.
- The political context has had an overpowering influence on the goals of the project and PRI demonstrated strategic opportunism and good judgement when managing the changing political context.
- The continuity of PRI’s involvement in these substantive matters was a key feature of enabling positive outcomes.
- The high regard of national authorities and civil society for PRI was a significant asset in enabling positive outcomes.
- The international management and coordination was of a very high standard.
- The project partnership with FHRI worked well.
- The project showed a high degree of success in leveraging other donor support to extend impact of the project.
- The project has had a cost neutral multiplier effect.

¹ Comment from Tajik NGO on the impact of the project.

² Comment from journalist at a meeting with the consultant in Amman, 29 March 2012.

- The project produced very high quality and appropriate documentation and outreach material.
- The project mobilised significant levels of support for the national and regional death penalty targets.
- The project used activities that were appropriate and valued by participants.

Project weaknesses

The project design was over ambitious in terms of:

- geographical scope;
- number of activities; and
- extent of impact.

The project would have benefited from the earlier finalisation of the research papers.

The international media activities have limited demonstrable impact on the project.

There was less obvious progress made on long-term imprisonment and life sentencing than death penalty targets.

3. Project Implementation

The project is characterised by the qualities of:

- **efficiency**, with the single documents being translated for use in four languages, good use of management resources, good partnerships and work working methods e.g. with FHRI in East Africa and with active participants like the International Commission of Jurists, Kenya and policy and practice ideas and developments shared across regions.
- **effectiveness**, highly appropriate activities to foster the potential for change, well chosen target groups and activities that were well selected to stimulate change and an approach that engaged participants and stakeholders in way that built commitment to and a momentum for reform.
- **sustainability**, an extremely useful body of outputs, including research reports, briefing documents, multi-media and training tools with long lasting utility, transforming awareness of practioners and building the capacity and confidence of participants and stakeholders to continue valuable work beyond the contractual duration of the project.

When asked what was different from before the project started, one respondent from Tajikistan answered:

“Increase in number of Tajik citizens supporting the abolition of death penalty”

4. Performance Against Objectives

Key observations and themes that emerged during the evaluation explore the performance against the objectives in more detail.

To establish moratoria on executions, to reduce death sentences, to restrict the application of and to abolish the death penalty in law through promotion of UN General Assembly Resolution 62/149.

Of all the objectives this is by far the most challenging. The project has made some progress at a regional level for example the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights’ (ACHPR) are in the process of drafting optional protocol on the abolition of the death penalty. PRI has also brought the issues of the project to the attention of an increased number of government and civil society stakeholders, as well as stakeholders at the inter-governmental level. During the project period, all countries that had an official or de facto moratorium maintained this status quo, which can be seen as a positive result.

To increase human rights safeguards in criminal justice reforms and activate international, regional and national preventive and oversight mechanisms through promotion of relevant international treaties.

Safeguards in the criminal justice system have been discretely increased through work with the judiciary and prison authorities at a national level. At an international level engagement with, and the interest of, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) represents progress concerning life imprisonment. Lobbying on the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR was mainly done at the country level though there was also work through the World Coalition Against the

Death Penalty's (WCADP) ratification campaign. PRI worked on ratification of OPCAT and implementation of National Preventative Mechanisms in project countries and this continues after the project duration.

To increase public awareness on abolition and on the need to respect human dignity in implementing moratoria and permanent alternatives to the death penalty.

During the evaluation there was consistent and explicit feedback that the media coverage at a national and regional level has increased in quantity and quality as a result of the project activities. The media has raised the issues of concern to the project and brought them to the attention of the public at a national and regional level. This increase in coverage and awareness was very much supported by the production of documentary films and film festivals, and the publication of the two information packs in four languages.

To promote transparency and to provide official statistics and independent monitoring reports on the criminal justice system.

The research documents in each region are a very rich source of data and information. It is unquestionable that these reports are only possible without the authorities' cooperation and willingness to be transparent. The many round tables and conferences also provided the opportunity for government officials to provide statistics and to share and compare statistics and trends.

To provide leadership and to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of networks and coalitions at national, regional and international level.

PRI, and with FHRI in East Africa, have been identified by project stakeholders as the leading agency on matters of national and regional activity on the abolition of the death penalty and life and long term imprisonment. The project has also ensured greater involvement by, and commitment from, a wide range of stakeholders to these issues through networks and coalitions. PRI showed considerable leadership through the project that included 22 national conferences and roundtables, 5 regional conferences and 1 multi-regional conference. Through the project PRI played an additional and valuable role in the work of WCADP.

To strengthen capacity of civil society and other stakeholders on advocacy and adopting media strategies in support of progressive abolition of the death penalty and implementing human rights standards in criminal justice systems.

Civil society and government representatives reported an increase in confidence to advocate for progressive abolition of the death penalty and implementation of human rights standards in criminal justice systems through participation in training events, conferences and having high quality guidance and research material. Also of note, PRI coordinated 19 training workshops and produced 4 training resources in 4 different languages during the project period. PRI has worked with civil society organisations to strengthen advocacy activities at international and regional level. There have also been a noticeable number of consolidated advocacy activities with international and local civil society with various UN bodies and at the OSCE and ACHPR. The establishment of the Kenyan national coalition, and the East African regional coalition are very solid outcomes.

5. Key Observations

The political context has had an overpowering influence on the goals of the project and PRI demonstrated strategic opportunism and good judgement when managing the changing political context.³

“For the introduction and protection of such standards, the existence of political will is very important, as no trainings or conferences can solve the problem without it”⁴

The project did not rely upon individual events to prompt change, it planned a sequence of mutually reinforcing activities, that were also linked to the work of others, nationally, regionally and internationally.

Few foresaw the political and social upheaval and conflict in the Middle East and North Africa. This created a meta-narrative of change in the region. However, the change was not always enabling for the aims of the project. In Egypt the discussions on the death penalty became unavoidably linked with the trial of former President Mubarak. There was also a rise in more influential political voices for those who wish to see an increased use of the death penalty and the use of the death penalty to settle scores against the former political elite. Elsewhere in the region the change was more progressive, for instance in Tunisia the project was able to accompany the movement for transformation and promote the abolition of the death penalty as part of new democratic and just social dispensation.

In those project countries in the region where there was not such dramatic change, governments were more cautious about provoking conflict and suppressing dissent. In Jordan and Morocco that has meant unprecedented space for civil society and other activists to voice their views on matter usually little discussed, in this case the death penalty.

In Kenya, the violence that culminated during the elections of 2008 set in motion a very significant process of reform, perhaps most marked by the new constitution, an environment of accountability of the State and reform of the judiciary and police. This period was also marked by landmark Court of Appeal ruling in the *Mutiso* case which abolished the mandatory death penalty for homicide. The flipside of this was with such vast issues to confront, there had been little cohesive activity in support of further reduction of the use of the death penalty and consideration of life imprisonment. However it was a fertile situation for the project to make swift and significant progress.

In Uganda the lack of pluralism in high government office, an unabated hold on power and the increasingly harsh repression of democratic protests augurs poorly for demands for reform and shaped the scope of ambition for project progress. But increasingly vocal opinion to reverse the limitation on terms of Presidential office indicate perhaps another period of change. The Anti-Homosexual Bill in Uganda has had a chilling and complex impact on the political environment for lobbying work on abolition, but has equally raised the profile of the death penalty in Uganda through heightened international and local media work.

³ Information from South Caucasus and Central Asia was derived by questionnaire and it was not appropriate to seek a detailed view of the changing political context in these two regions.

⁴ Feedback from a project participant in South Caucasus region.

Russia has made a public commitment to meet Council of Europe standards in their places of detention, essentially the transformation from dormitory to cell arrangements. This would on the surface indicate the government's attention to improving prison conditions, however, in practice the reality is very different, with the 2009 appointment of a police official to head the prison service and much reduced willingness for the government to work with civil society on matters of prisons. The conditions of life imprisonment remain very harsh and entangled with the life sentence for high profile individuals with political links. Presidents Putin and Medvedev have publicly spoken of their opposition to the death penalty but 'bow' to what is claimed to be 'public demand' for its retention. A new term of office for President Putin is viewed with some optimism for the abolition of the death penalty. No one has suggested that his time in office will herald swift and bold human rights change, but he has a track record of supporting the moratorium and if he so decides to push for abolition he has sufficient power to ensure it happens.

Western European government pressure on Belarus, mainly around political prisoners, the disputed Presidential election in December 2010, and the bombings in Minsk in April 2011, changed the nature of the progress that was anticipated e.g. working with the 2010 working group under parliament on how to introduce a moratorium on death penalty. Early assessments of plans and progress had to be reviewed as the Belarusian authorities responded by essentially ceasing any western European engagement on such matters. Conversely, the project took advantage of this situation, by strategically using the Russian identity of the PRI Moscow team, using the vacuum and avoiding all engagement on the most sensitive issues, torture and political prisoners, to increase work on the abolition of the death penalty and discussions on life imprisonment. Gains made, such as engagement with authorities and the film festival, are demonstrably fragile in the face of such political leadership of President Lukashenko and the most recent executions of two young men in March 2012, following unfair trials.

In Ukraine the authorities have been under pressure and their response is to try and build a better image of prison system. They were sensitive to the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) report⁵ which noted "It is of great concern to the CPT that no progress was observed during the 2009 visit as regards the regime of activities offered to life-sentenced prisoners". Ukraine's response to western European scrutiny was markedly different from that of Belarus, and made possible swift and sustained progress for the project.

The continuity of PRI's involvement in these substantive matters was a key feature of enabling positive outcomes.

PRI's work on the death penalty and long-term and life imprisonment, notably the outputs, outcomes and lessons from the previous EIDHR funded programmes, including in the 2003-2006 project in the Commonwealth Caribbean implemented with Simons Muirhead and Burton, the first phase of PRI's global death penalty project 2007-2009 '*Global Action to Abolish the Death Penalty*' DDH2006/119-763/01-LOT2, and the training of criminal justice professionals and NGOs through the EIDHR programme B7-704/1999/0341 was seen as providing a robust platform for this complex and ambitious project. There were sound contacts, a knowledge base, and a degree of clarity on PRI's approach to the death penalty and its alternatives.

⁵ <http://www.cpt.coe.int/documents/ukr/2011-29-inf-eng.htm>

The high regard of national authorities and civil society for PRI was a significant asset in enabling positive outcomes.

In Russia those representatives from government, or who had previously worked in government, all noted that the environment for PRI to work with the prison authorities had changed much in the last few years and was now less enabling. This was part of the wider national political environment, with some linkages to elections. The point emphasised by most was the astute positioning of PRI and relationship management by the PRI Moscow staff allowed the current work to succeed to the degree it has. The absence of this existing relationship or a lesser reputation for PRI in Russia would have certainly limited the progress of the project in Russia and by extension, the rest of the region, the research would have been far more difficult and far less revealing. It is also worth noting the ability of the PRI Moscow office to work in Belarus when virtually all western European reform groups and experts cannot enter the country.

PRI's work in East Africa, in particular the long standing relationship with the Ugandan Prison Service including such seminal work as the Kampala Declaration and the work in Kenya with paralegals, on community service and the workshop that lead to 'Towards Methods of Improving Prison Policy in Kenya' proved highly valuable in ensuring cooperation and building networks. The long standing reputation of PRI in these countries, along with a highly respected partner in FHRI, ensures access to, and participation of, senior post holders from government authorities.

PRI's presence in Jordan and continuity in the MENA has had less time to mature. The PRI team is relatively new, with significant staff turnover from the time of project design and has not had the chance to benefit in the same way. Many of the required relationships had to be built from new which is a time consuming process. Part of the staff turnover in the Jordan office was due to under budgeting for the project posts, meaning suitable candidates could not be recruited or retained.

In Central Asia and South Caucasus the questionnaires did not specifically address the matter of PRI reputation and performance, in the responses there were no criticism of PRI though considerable praise.

PRI's reputation as an expert criminal justice reform organisation was also very important in allowing engagement on the whole issue of the death penalty, which is overtly political. PRI approaches the death penalty with an additional emphasis on the need to focus on challenges of alternative sanctions to the death penalty and can comment with authority on these challenges. This approach, expertise and well deserved reputation facilitates the opportunity for a fuller engagement with national authorities.

The international management and coordination of the project was of a very high standard.

The project had a very definite profile of an international action. For PRI it has been several years since a global project has been supported by mainly one donor. Much of PRI's programme implementation profile is of regional and national activity. This project was in part regional, but, directed from the PRI head office. The head office guided and facilitated and built upon coordinated and focused national and regional actions. The project budget was designed to allow full coordination and quality control from PRI London. More importantly the PRI London office was, without

exception, highly commended for the pro-active and supportive role. This was voiced by project partners and PRI regional staff who appreciated the exceptional efforts of the Project Manager to ensure delivery of the project. There were high levels of coordination between regions, which allowed more potent international advocacy initiatives and good opportunities for project reflection and learning. Quality control from the international coordination was also obvious in the project document outputs which are consistent in approach and of a high standard.

The project partnership with FHRI worked well.

Activities and implementation lead by FHRI in East Africa ensured value for money with the reduced logistical costs. More importantly the dual approach of a Ugandan and an international NGO was a strategic success, with both able to play slightly different roles in the project. FHRI also represented the project in regional advocacy activities such as attendance at the 48th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the creation of the East African and Great Lakes Coalition on the Abolition of the Death Penalty in Kinshasa.

The partnership was described by FHRI as '*demonstrably transparent*' which is an excellent basis for effective cooperation.

The project showed a high degree of success in leveraging other donor support to extend the impact of the project.

Co-funders included, amongst others, the FCO in MENA, Uganda and Kazakhstan, Swedish Institute for the second Alexandria conference in September 2010, the OSCE in Tajikistan, the UNODC in Kyrgyzstan, and the Open Society Foundations in Belarus and Russia.

The project has had a cost neutral multiplier effect.

The impact of the project has spread to countries and activities outside of the project design. In March 2012 FHRI were invited to Nigeria to make a presentation at a high level death penalty event. Nigerian Delegates, (PRI Board Member and a Commissioner of the ACHPR) attended the September 2011 London inter-regional conference. The project outputs, research and briefings and experience will have increased FHRI effectiveness in Nigeria.

PRI's work with coalitions such as the WCADP meant the knowledge and experience generated by the project reached many other locations beyond the project remit.

The project contributed to the WCADP's campaign on the Second Optional Protocol which targets a number of priority countries including: Dominican Republic, Latvia, Benin, Mongolia, Bolivia, Poland, Angola, Armenia, Burundi and El Salvador. PRI has also been involved on their moratorium campaign (for the UN GA moratorium resolutions) and World Day against the Death Penalty activities.

PRI has also conducted joint advocacy activities with the Coalition in Puerto Rico.

Without the project this added value to the work of WCADP would not have happened.

The project produced mainly very high quality and appropriate documentation and outreach material.

There was very high praise from project stakeholders on the documentation that the project produced and used in activities.

The **training materials** were of a very high quality, they were relevant, innovative and easy to use. The training tools were developed for the different stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project and focused to respond to key gaps and needs.

The training materials produced were:

- Protecting the rights of those facing the death penalty and life and long term imprisonment – mainly for criminal justice officers (in Arabic, English, French and Russian);
- Advocacy tools in the fight against the death penalty and alternative sanctions that respect international human rights standards – mainly for human rights activists and non-state actors (in Arabic, English, French and Russian);
- Reporting on the death penalty – for media professionals (in Arabic, English, French and Russian); and
- The death penalty in the Middle East and North Africa – toolkit for civil society (in Arabic and English).

The use of **documentary tools** and film festivals was roundly praised by groups who attended the screenings, however there was a variation in the quality of the documentaries. There were five documentaries, one for each region, though the consultant was only able to view three, South Caucasus film “Behind Bars”

Central Asia film “Forgotten” and the Middle East and North Africa film. In the opinion of the consultant the film from South Caucasus lacks obvious qualities of independence and could be described as more reflective of the view of the prison authorities. The film from MENA Africa suffers from questions of copyright infringement through the use of broadcast footage. This has not been resolved with professional legal opinion and so remains of limited potential, it is however an engaging documentary. The documentaries can be viewed <http://www.penalreform.org/multimedia>

The **five research publications**:

- Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (published in English and Russian);
- East Africa: Kenya and Uganda (published in English);
- Eastern Europe: Belarus, Russia and Ukraine (published in English and Russian);
- Middle East and North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia (published in Arabic and English); and
- South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (published in English, Georgian and Russian).

are of considerable use for evidence-based advocacy and offer potential for updateable baseline references and have a utility beyond the project.

The two information packs:

- Alternative Sanctions to the Death Penalty Information Pack 2011; and
- Death Penalty Information Pack 2011

were practical, providing advice and information on complex issues and processes in simple and accessible style.

The project also delivered briefings and statements for discrete activities that collectively make a considerable body of highly useful and legitimate advocacy and technical documents.

The budget was well used to allow for high quality research, production and translation. Publications were well displayed on PRIs website <http://www.penalreform.org/death-penalty-publications>

The project mobilised significant levels of support for the national and regional death penalty targets.

The newly established East Africa Regional and Great Lakes coalitions and the growing Kenya coalition are key examples. In Uganda the network of those engaged positively on the death penalty debate has grown as the project extended its reach to a broad base of civil society organisations and has newly attracted the welcome support of some important voices in faith groups.

In MENA, there has been something of a hiatus in the activity of the regional and national coalitions, dips in funding and competition over leadership and identity had rendered them somewhat inactive.

In Russia, in the absence of state executions for many years, there is little enthusiasm in civil society. Responses to alleged extra judicial killings are much more a priority for the human rights defenders and activists communities. Engagement with civil society in Belarus had more traction, with groups enthused, where possible mobilised into activity and voicing commitment to continue to build on the work of the project.

In Central Asia, in particular Tajikistan, the project was described as creating widespread public debate and increased public support for the abolition of the death penalty.

The project used activities that were appropriate and valued by participants.

“Monitoring of the prisoners and their conditions shows that the conditions, staff attitude toward prisoners has improved”⁶.

⁶ Civil society participant from South Caucasus commenting on the impact of the project.

The mutually reinforcing nature of the activities was well thought through and of considerable use in the project. Accounting for the duration, regional scope and language diversity the project must be applauded for successfully completing so many activities and to such a high standard.

The activities in the project are described as the following:

- Advocacy and Lobbying
- Media dissemination
- Monitoring, research and analysis
- Networking and Coalition building (see above).
- Capacity building

However there are many activities that cut across these categories, for example the roundtables and conferences that facilitated networking also increased capacity, prompted media coverage, disseminated information, and were advocacy opportunities. Because of this I use slightly different terminology for the activities.

Advocacy and lobbying

International and regional level

There was a very high regard for the mutually reinforcing value of the work that was conducted internationally and the work conducted regionally and nationally. There was a good blend of work with UN bodies (Committee against Torture, UPR, UNODC, Special Rapporteurs on Torture and on Extrajudicial Killings) and regional mechanisms such as the OSCE, ACHPR and the EU, though the Arab League offered less opportunity during the project.

The international advocacy work was far reaching in its scope and both used and strengthened a wide range of interest groups alongside long standing advocacy partners such as the WCADP. The international advocacy was described in MENA as prompting governments' attention and engagement in national issues.

With the UN it is noteworthy that the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary and Arbitrary Executions has taken an additional interest in the death penalty suggesting that judicial executions, due the weaknesses in all criminal justices system, fall within the issues of concern to this Special Procedure. This is consistent with the project message the death penalty not justified in any circumstances.

Work on life imprisonment and death row conditions was also raised with the Special Rapporteur on Torture. PRI spoke with the Special Rapporteur on a panel on solitary confinement and isolation of those sentenced to death and life imprisonment at a side event at the Human Rights Council (HRC). This issue was noted in the Special Rapporteur's report to the HRC.

PRI raised the issues of the impact of the death penalty and death row conditions on the children of condemned prisons at the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This activity and issue was noted in the CRC's reports and recommendations.

The project also worked very well to engage UNODC and member states on the issue of life imprisonment through participation at the Crime Commission. The regional research documents provided robust and current evidence that made possible fuller interaction and serious consideration on the need for international

guidelines on the matter. The UNODC is the custodian of standards and norms in the criminal justice system and has reflected that the 1994 report by the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch on life imprisonment is out of date and inadequate as the only international document on life imprisonment.

PRI also engaged at the level of the OSCE, raising concerns regarding Belarus.

PRI submitted joint reports to the UN Secretary General on his moratorium report and his report on the question of the death penalty.

Although this was after the project period, PRI was also present at the 126th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held in Uganda in April 2012, and provided briefings and documents to members on the role of parliamentarians in leading penal reform, including abolition of the death penalty and humane alternative sanctions.

The international advocacy was also creative and worked practically and well with Essex Human Rights Centre, International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA) and Human Rights Watch (HRW). The international advocacy work with IHRA and HRW on the death penalty for drugs offences had a significant impact for example catalysing internal reflection on the development of human rights guidance for UNODC.

Other international advocacy activities included work on the export of lethal injection drugs from Europe to the US. The European Union has controls to prohibit and restrict the international trade in equipment that could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, through Council Regulation (EC) [No. 1236/2005](#). Death penalty drugs were neither prohibited items (under Annex II of the Regulation) nor controlled items (under Annex III the Regulation). As a result of PRI and other stakeholders advocacy efforts, in December 2011 the EU amended the annexes to include these drugs which effectively restricts all trade from the EU in lethal injection drugs.

National level

Lobbying letters were sent to Armenia, Morocco and Tunisia regarding the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol on the ICCPR in September 2011.

On the Convention Against Torture in October 2011, PRI submitted a shadow report on Morocco with the World Coalition against the Death Penalty.

With the WCADP, PRI made written submissions to the governments of:

- Jordan – May 2011;
- South Korea – September 2011;
- Belize – May 2011;
- Trinidad and Tobago – February 2011;
- Iraq – October 2011;
- Governor of Illinois – January 2011;
- DRC – November 2010;
- UAE – May 2010; and
- Belarus – March 2010.

PRI has provided support to various Belarusian NGOs to strengthen their international advocacy skills, which resulted in the submission of a joint NGO

alternative report to the UN Committee Against Torture for its session in November 2011.

PRI also provided the Special Rapporteur on Torture, ahead of his visit to Kyrgyzstan in December 2011, with a briefing on the treatment and conditions of life imprisonment, which he then raised in his report.

It must be acknowledged that the effectiveness of these interventions was much enhanced by the richness and legitimacy of the evidence based advocacy documents produced through the project.

Roundtables and conferences.

“Organization of the event was great. Logistics and agenda were on very high level”⁷

The sequence of 22 national conferences and roundtables, 5 regional and 1 multi-regional conferences worked extremely well to build up a body of analysis, documentation, experience and contacts with good results.

From the MENA and East Africa, South Caucasus and Central Asia and to a slightly different extent Ukraine and Belarus and lesser extent Russia there was high praise for the events that brought people together e.g. national, regional and international round tables and conferences.

Substantively, participants tended to be most supportive of the opportunity to learn from comparative experience exchanges and also the opportunities to discuss with peers and fellow professionals. Even the most senior officials, as noted by a government official from Kazakhstan, with long experience of, and exposure to, such events, found value in the comparative experience.

The materials made available and presentations during conferences were highly appreciated. It is important to note there were no complaints about logistics, which can often tarnish the reputation of an event and be the abiding memory. This is a good indicator of the high standard of management.

“The conference was great by all means. The people, the location, the contents, the atmosphere, the care... everything was just perfect”⁸

The conferences, seminars and roundtables prompted several accounts of individual follow up actions from participants and a willingness for there to be further action within their own constituencies.

The Commissioner for Human Rights, African Commission Human and Peoples' Rights wrote of her intention to include the interregional conference in the Commissions' newsletter.

One Kenyan Prison Service participant noted attendance at the London inter-regional conference gave her materials and the 'courage' to start speaking publicly against the death penalty. This has had a ripple effect and more representatives from the Prison Service and Ministry of Home, Affairs Heritage and Sports, have followed her example with first such similarly supportive public statements.

⁷ Comment from Kyrgyz participant at the Central Asia regional conference.

⁸ Lebanese participant at the interregional conference in London.

A representative from the Kenyan judiciary who attended the London inter-regional conference reported he was keen to use resource people from the interregional conference at their own and regional events. The participant found the experiences and analysis and arguments presented so compelling and convincing he wanted to replicate the content of the event in their own judicial training institutions.

One parliamentarian from the Middle East and North Africa who attended the inter-regional conference reported she was so inspired by what was presented, in particular the paper on Islam and the death penalty, that upon return she undertook further research. In doing so she found enough dogma to support her change of view for the abolition of the death penalty and work on this in her constituency. The individual change is in itself a success, but of much value is the result of her individual follow up and commitment.

In Belarus, there was considerable pessimism about government involvement with the roundtable. National civil society reported the result of the round table as a cause for optimism, with government highly involved and open during the round table.

In Central Asia the round tables and national conferences prompted notable follow up from civil society, in particular using the documentation and experiences from expert speakers, to enhance their work with national media and advocacy work e.g. in Tajikistan lobbying for the abolition of the death penalty at the Universal Periodic Review, in Kyrgyzstan press releases were sent to the media and information was displayed on websites. Participants from Kyrgyzstan at the Central Asia regional conference adapted their advocacy work to include legislative bodies. One participant from Kazakhstan reported that from the interregional conference she used information in her university lectures and in submissions on draft legislation.

Media dissemination.

Much was noted about the need to prepare the public for such a time when abolition legislation is under consideration, improving the quality of media coverage offers considerable influence in this regard. The trainings for members of the media, as well as inspiring individual changes in opinions of participants, were reported to have been of significant professional use for participants, and prompted an increased number of articles of a higher quality and beyond the formal project activity. This has meant journalists are now increasingly using PRI and FHRI as an expert resource on these matters. The training of members of the media was consistently described by direct participants and project stakeholders as highly effective.

Some participants noted that their own stance on the death penalty had been altered because of the training, to an extent that some changed from pro death penalty to abolitionist. While the project can be much satisfied with individual results, what is more important is the wider influence of media professionals on the public and sometime politicians.

There was also considerable media dissemination as a result of the events and the high quality and relevant documentation and the documentaries produced by the project.

It was very hard to assess the consequence of the international media work undertaken by IPS, which included a webpage, newsletters, articles, columns, and

three pod casts. While there was considerable reach of the IPS newsletters it was not possible to assess the nature of the recipients.

The use of documentaries and film festivals was seen as an excellent approach. It was noted that in Belarus the film festival exceeded all expectations with the attendance of government officials and the openness of debate after the screening. The documentaries were also a very useful output for initiating wider media coverage for use by other project stakeholders in their own activities.

Prison staff training.

The training of prison officials was highly appreciated and feedback reported that as a result of the project, staff were doing things differently and better. A prison official from Azerbaijan described the approach of prison staff as “fundamentally different”. In Georgia, prison staff noted that they now dealt differently with prisoners and communication with prisoners had improved. However, it was also noted that further training for more staff and different categories of staff was also required. In Tajikistan the capacity building, which was not only limited to training and was described as increasing the legal literacy of law enforcement officers, judges, officers of the criminal justice system and law students.

Monitoring, research and analysis

The documentation (see above) produced by the project is of an excellent standard. It is coherent and evidence based. It played a vital role in making the other activities as successful as they could be, ensuring that participants had current, relevant, appropriate and legitimate tools to carry on their work after training, or conferences or during advocacy initiatives.