

# Press Release

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## **Execution in Texas: US should end its pick and choose attitude towards international law**

*Statement by Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis*

Strasbourg, 06.08.2008 - "I am most concerned by the execution of Mexican national José Medellin yesterday in Texas. Mr Medellin was not informed of his right to consular help at the time of his arrest even though the United States are legally bound to guarantee this right under the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. This is a regrettable attitude by a country which is very vocal about its commitment to the rule of law. The judicial authorities also blatantly ignored the order by the International Court of Justice to stay the execution on the grounds of the violation of the right to consular assistance. I wrote to the Texas Board of pardons and paroles in July, asking for a stay of the execution, but my appeal has been disregarded in the same way as the calls from the Mexican government, the UN Secretary General and several other governments and international organisations.

The issue at stake is not the guilt of Mr Medellin. He was found guilty of a particularly gruesome crime and he deserved to be punished.

The problem is the death penalty, which is rejected by a great majority of democratic and civilised countries across the world and also the pick and choose attitude of the United States of America – and its individual states - when it comes to respecting international law. The execution of Mr Medellin was therefore not only a violation of human rights and human dignity, but also an act of arrogant defiance which undermines the collective mechanisms for peace and security in the world."

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