

**Jan Erik Wetzel, Keplerstr. 25a, 50823 Cologne, Germany**

His Excellency  
Mr. Joe Ghartey  
Attorney General and Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
P.O. Box M60  
Accra  
**GHANA**

13 March 2007

Dear Minister,

*"Everyone has the right to life!"*

This was stated for the first time in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948. Since then more than two-thirds of all countries in the world have abolished the death penalty in law or in practice. This is only consistent, as the death penalty has been shown not to have a particularly deterring effect and is a great human rights violation in the light of its cruel application and irreversibility.

A positive development also exists in West Africa. For several years, Amnesty International has observed a trend in favour of abolition in Africa and, more specifically, in West Africa where since 2004 Senegal and Liberia have abolished the death penalty. I hope that Ghana will follow their example in the near future and I was very pleased to learn that in 2005 you publicly stated your opposition to the death penalty. As far as I know, no executions have taken place in Ghana since 1993. Therefore I think the time is ripe to codify this laudable practise by ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

For the immediate future I urge you to do everything in your power towards the introduction of a moratorium on all executions, as 152 people are presently imprisoned on death row according to the Ghanaian Prison Services. This would demonstrate the importance you grant to the right to life.

Furthermore, I ask you to urge President Kufuor to use his prerogative of mercy, as he did in 2003, by commuting all pending death sentences. Given Ghana's position in the sub-region as a shining example for democracy, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights, which is well known in Germany, a move on part of your Government towards abolition would represent a unique and important contribution to the death penalty debate all over West Africa.

Yours sincerely, (sign. Jan Wetzel)

cc to:

Accra Mail  
Daily Graphic  
The Ghanaian Chronicle  
Graphic Ghana  
Ghana Today  
Modern Ghana

