…………………………………….. 2019

Mr. Abe Shinzo

Prime Minister of Japan

Cabinet Secretariat

1-6-1 Nagata-cho, Chiyoda-ku

Tokyo 100 – 8968

JAPAN

Dear Prime Minister,

As a member/supporter of ACAT-Switzerland, the Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture and the Death Penalty, I am writing to you on the occasion of

**the World Day against the Death Penalty (10th of October).**

This year, the World Coalition against the Death Penalty spotlights the suffering of children of persons sentenced to death or already executed. In line with the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Coalition stresses that children are often the forgotten victims of the death penalty.

It is with deep concern that I learnt from different reports that prisoners convicted to the death penalty as well as their families and lawyers are not informed in advance about the planned execution. The detainees and their relatives are thus living in a state of permanent fear and stress.

Detainees on death row are held in solitary confinement and must stay in the same standing or kneeling position during the entire day. Convicts are also forbidden to speak to each other. Medical assistance is not sufficient. Confidential access to a lawyer and communication to the outside world are strongly restricted. According to the UN Committee against torture (CAT), these conditions of detention amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. They also constitute a heavy burden for the families of the prisoners, in particular for the children.

In view of these considerations, **I call on you, dear Prime Minister,**

**• to enact a moratorium on all executions, to order the commutation of the current death sentences and to enable the total abolition of the death penalty in Japan;**

**• to bring an end to the secrecy currently applied to the death penalty;**

**• to apply the UN “Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners” (Mandela Rules) to the conditions of detention in death row and to resort to solitary confinement only exceptionally and for a limited period of time.**

I thank you, dear Prime Minister, for the concern you will bring to this important matter.

Yours respectfully,

**Copy:** **Embassy of Japan in Switzerland, Engestrasse 53, 3001 Bern, Switzerland**