

Saint Lucia Rejects UK Request to Scrap Death Penalty



Castries, December 17 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Government officials in Saint Lucia have rejected a request by the United Kingdom to waive its death penalty, in exchange for assistance in solving crime.

Saint Lucia is part of the Commonwealth of Nations which encompasses some 53 countries, most of which were former British colonies.

Saint Lucia's Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony has described the UK Foreign Office request "improper," while the Island's Foreign Affairs Minister Victor La Corbiniere says that as a sovereign state, Saint Lucia will decide its position on capital punishment for itself. La Corbiniere added that he will not be swayed by the UK or the European Union on this matter.

The death penalty is rarely used in Saint Lucia, with the last hanging on the island taking place in 1995. The island's leading human rights advocate, Attorney-at-Law Mary Francis says the time has come to reconsider the national position on the death penalty as a human rights issue.

Some older Saint Lucians believe each case should be weighed separately to determine the extent of punishment. The British High Commission in Saint Lucia has said the death penalty has no place in the modern world.

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