

The International Prison Chaplains' Association Eighth Quinquennial Conference  
**"A LIVING HOPE"**

CCT (Church of Christ in Thailand), BANGKOK, THAILAND

October 2-7, 2025

Conference declaration

**DECLARATION OF THE 8<sup>th</sup> WORLDWIDE CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRISON CHAPLAINS' ASSOCIATION**

"A Living Hope": We, 123 Prison Chaplains from more than 30 countries, members of the International Prison Chaplains Association (IPCA) convened in Bangkok, Thailand from October 2-7, 2025 for our Eighth Worldwide Conference on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organisation and adopted the following Declaration at our General Meeting:

**TO ALL GOVERNMENTS:**

1. On the tenth anniversary of the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules of the Treatment of Prisoners (the "Nelson Mandela rules") and the fifteenth anniversary of the Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the "Bangkok rules"), the conference acclaims these rules as providing a creative space in which to implement positive change in prison systems. We undertake to adopt an "all on board" approach, partnering with other NGOs and institutions to this end, and urge all governments to apply all aspects of these rules.
2. While recognizing a diversity of views and experiences, the conference reaffirms IPCA's opposition to the use of capital punishment and urges governments to consider the scientific evidence of its ineffectiveness in combating crime.
3. The conference reasserts IPCA's longstanding commitment to Restorative Justice in all its forms, based on the core pillars of "encounter, repair, transform" and engaging victims, offenders and communities. We encourage governments to promote programmes, sentencing plans and alternatives to custodial sentences that reflect its principles in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16: "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" (*Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*) to eradicate recidivism, create a safe society and spearhead restorative justice as a tool for rehabilitation.

4. In a world of trauma, we recognize that the prison environment concentrates traumatic experiences; we encourage the implementation of 'First Aid Stress and Trauma' and similar practices to assist all those affected.

#### **TO ALL CHURCHES:**

1. The conference also urges churches to embrace the mindset of Restorative Justice: accepting the need for victims, offenders and communities to be restored to each other and playing their own role in that process as necessary, in particular by supporting and facilitating the ministry of prison chaplains, welcoming former inmates, and providing care and support for victims.
2. The conference reaffirms IPCA's Christian identity and as part of that, the need to promote ecumenical relations, hospitality to those of other faiths and none, and nurture good relations with other faith groups at all levels wherever possible.

#### **TO OURSELVES:**

1. In a world increasingly characterized by global inequalities and barriers to travel, we wish to honour and serve prison ministry carried out in every region of the world; we undertake to overcome these challenges within our own organisation in a way that is both equitable and empowering.
2. Amid a hardening climate within many prison systems worldwide, we seek all the more to embody the Gospel within the whole prison community.
3. We welcome the contributions forwarded to the conference by prisoners and reaffirm our desire for their intrinsic worth and dignity as human beings to be recognised irrespective of their actions.

**We give all praise and glory to God who "in his great mercy... has given us new birth into a living hope" (1 Peter 1:3).**