

Robert BADINTER (born March 30th 1928) is a French lawyer who is against the Death Penalty. His involvement in favor of the abolition of the Death Penalty began to develop especially following the execution of Roger Bontems on November 28th 1972. Bontems was Buffet's accomplice during the hostage-taking of a guard and a nurse at the prison, “ Centrale de Clairvaux “ . During the attack, Buffet cut the throat of both the guard and the nurse. During their trial, this fact was established. All the same, the jury decided to condemn both men to death. The condemnation to death of 'an innocent man for the murder committed by another man, condemned and executed for this same murder', revolted Robert Badinter who began to fight even more actively against the Death Penalty.

It was thus, that in 1976 he agreed to defend Patrick Henry, kidnapper and murderer of Philippe Bertrand, a child of nine years of age. French public opinion was particularly shocked by the attitude of the assassin: during the trial, before being charged and arrested, he paraded before reporters proclaiming that kidnappers and murderers of children deserved to die. Robert Badinter pleaded against the Death Penalty whilst another lawyer for the defense, Robert Bocquillon, led the defense. Patrick Henry was sentenced to life imprisonment. Between this trial and the abolition of the Death Penalty in 1981, three more people were executed. As Chief Justice (1981- 1986), one of the first actions taken by Robert Badinter was to present a bill aiming to abolish the Death Penalty in France. This bill became a law on September 30th 1981.