



DEATH ROW CONDITIONS

FACTS AND FIGURES

16th World Day against the Death Penalty

[1] ABOLITIONIST AND RETENTIONIST COUNTRIES

More than two thirds of the world's countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practiceⁱ.

- **107 countries**ⁱⁱ have abolished the death penalty for all crimes;
- **7 countries**ⁱⁱⁱ have abolished the death penalty for all crimes except extraordinary crimes such as those committed in times of war;
- **28 countries**^{iv} can be considered **abolitionist in practice** in that they have not executed anyone during the last 10 years and are believed to have a policy or established practice of not carrying out executions.
- Therefore, **142 countries have abolished** the death penalty in law or in practice.
- **56 countries** and territories **still uphold the death penalty** and use this punishment;
- **23 countries**^v carried out **executions** in 2017;
- In 2017, the top five executioners were **China, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia**.

[2] PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS WORLD ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY

Between January 2017 and June 2018, **3** countries abolished the death penalty in law for all crimes: **Mongolia, Guinea and Burkina Faso** and one for ordinary crimes only: **Guatemala**. 170 of the 193 member states of the UN were execution-free in 2017.

In the Americas, for the ninth consecutive year, the USA was the only nation to carry out executions in 2017.

In Europe, Belarus was the only country to carry out executions in 2017. Two executions were recorded.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, **28** executions were recorded in two countries compared to **22** executions in five countries in 2016. However, the number of death sentences decreased from **1086** in 2016 to at least **878** in 2017. **Nigeria** logged the highest number of death sentences in the region.

[3] DEATH SENTENCES AND EXECUTIONS

In 2017 at least **993 people** (excluding China) were executed in **23 countries** and at least **2.591** people were sentenced to death in **53 countries**. These figures only reflect cases of which Amnesty International was aware and the actual number is certainly higher.

[Asia]

Amnesty International has not given any estimates on the number of executions in **China**. Official national statistics on the application of capital punishment remain a state secret. It is believed that **thousands** of executions took place in 2017. In **Pakistan**, executions, decreased by 31% compared to 2016. **Afghanistan** executed 5 people, **Bangladesh** 6, **Japan** and **Malaysia** 4 and **Singapore** 8. Amnesty has not given any estimates for **North Korea** and **Viet Nam**.

[Middle East]

The number of executions recorded **in the Middle East and North Africa** decreased from **856** in 2016 to **847** in 2017.

According to Amnesty International, the overall number of executions carried out in **Iran** also decreased from at least **567** in 2016 to at least **507** in 2017. According to Iran Human Rights' annual report, at least **517 people** were executed in 2017, with at least **31 public executions**.

Saudi Arabia executed at least 146 people in 2017, this figure is slightly lower than in 2016 with 154 executions, but maintains the high level set in 2015. In **Iraq**, the number of executions continues to rise with at least **125** executions in 2017 compared to **88** in 2016.

[North America]

In the United States **8 states** carried out executions in 2017, taking the lives of **23 people**. This figure remains one of the lowest number of executions recorded since 1991.

19 states^{vi} have abolished the death penalty; **31** retain it. Of these, 4 states^{viii} have established official moratoriums on executions. The federal authorities have not carried out any executions since 2003 and the military authorities since 1961.

[4] METHODS OF EXECUTION

The following methods have been used:

- **beheading** (Saudi Arabia),
- **hanging** (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Palestine, Pakistan, Singapore, South Sudan)
- **lethal injection** (China, USA, Viet Nam)
- **shooting** (Bahrein, Belarus, China, North Korea, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen).

There were no reports of judicial executions carried out by stoning in 2017.

[5] USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY AGAINST JUVENILE OFFENDERS

International human rights treaties and customary international law forbid the use of capital punishment for all those under 18 at the time of the crime of which they are accused. This ban is inscribed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The countries which still uphold capital punishment for some crimes are all party to at least one of these treaties which expressly forbid the execution of juvenile offenders.

However, a small number of countries continue to execute juvenile offenders. At least **5 people were executed in Iran** for crimes they allegedly committed when they were under 18 years of age in 2017. Other juvenile offenders are also believed to be under a death sentence in, **Bangladesh, Iran, Maldives, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.**

[6] INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS SUPPORTING ABOLITION

Progress towards abolition has been made through the adoption of international treaties, whereby States pledge not to use capital punishment:

- **Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty** and has been ratified by **85 States**, 2 other countries have signed the Protocol, thereby signaling their intention to become party to this instrument later;

- **Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights on the abolition of the death penalty**, has been ratified by **13 States** on the American continent and signed by 2 others.

- **Protocol No. 6 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Human Rights Convention) on the abolition of the death penalty**, which has been ratified by **46 European States** and signed by one other;

- **Protocol No. 13 to the European Human Rights Convention concerning the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances**, which has been ratified by **44 European States** and signed by one other.

The objective of Protocol No. 6 to the European Human Rights Convention is the abolition of the death penalty in **peace time** whereas Protocol No. 13 provides for the **total abolition** of the death penalty in all circumstances. The two other protocols provide for the **total abolition** of capital punishment but gives States the possibility, if they so wish, to use it exceptionally in times of war.

In December 2018, the UN General Assembly will adopt its seventh **resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty**. In 2016 the number of votes in favor of the **sixth resolution 71/187** was the same as in 2014 (117), while 40 voted against and 31 abstained.

ⁱ Sources: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/death-penalty>, <http://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org> and <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org>

ⁱⁱ Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Cook Islands, Congo (Republic of), Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Fiji, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niue, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia (including Kosovo), Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, UK, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela. .

ⁱⁱⁱ Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador, Israel, Kazakhstan, Peru.

^{iv} Algeria, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Ghana, Grenada, Kenya, Laos, Liberia, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco/Western Sahara, Myanmar, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, South Korea (the Republic of Korea), Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tonga, Tunisia, Zambia.

^v Afghanistan (6), Bangladesh (10), Belarus (4+), Botswana (1), China (+), Egypt (44+), Indonesia (4), Iran (567+), Iraq (88+), Japan (3), Malaysia (9), Nigeria (3), North Korea (+), Pakistan (87+), Palestine (State of) (3: Hamas authorities, Gaza), Saudi Arabia (154+), Singapore (4), Somalia (14: Puntland 1, Somaliland 6, Federal Government of Somalia 7), South Sudan (+), Sudan (2), Taiwan (1), USA (20), Viet Nam (+).

^{vi} Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin and District of Columbia.