

WORLD COALITION

AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

www.worldcoalition.org

Steering Committee members:

Amnesty International, Arab Coalition Against the Death Penalty, Collectif Unitaire National de Soutien à Mumia Abu-Jamal, Coalition nationale pour l'abolition de la peine de mort au Maroc, Community of Sant'Egidio, Death Penalty Focus, Culture pour la Paix et la Justice, Ensemble contre la peine de mort, International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, Fédération Syndicale Unitaire, International Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture, Lawyers For Human Rights International, Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights, National Association of Criminal Defence Lawyers, Paris Bar, Penal Reform International, Puerto Rico Bar Association, Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty, Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, Tuscany Region.

Other members:

ACAT France, Advocates for Human Rights, American Friends Service Committee, Association for the Rights to Live, City of Andoain, Association Marocaine des Droits Humains, Bahrain Human Rights Society, Belarusian Helsinki Committee, City of Braine l'Alleud, Centre for Prisoner's Rights, Centre marocain des droits humains, Coalition nationale tunisienne contre la peine de mort, Collectif des Organisations des Jeunes Solidaires du Congo-Kinshasa, Comité des Observateurs des Droits de l'Homme, Comitato Paul Rougeau, Comité Syndical Francophone de l'Education et de la Formation, Conférence Internationale des Barreaux, Congolese Youth Movement, Conseil National pour les Libertés en Tunisie, CURE, Death Watch International, City of Dijon, Federation of Liberal Students, Forum Africain contre la Peine de Mort, Forum 90 Japan, Forum marocain pour la Vérité et la Justice, Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, Hands Off Cain, Hope & Justice, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, HURILAWS, International Organization for Diplomatic Relations, Iranian Human Rights Activists Groups in EU and North America, Iraqi Alliance for the Prevention of the death penalty, Iraqi Center for Human Rights and Democracy Studies, Italian Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, Journey of Hope, KontraS, Law Student's Forum, Legal and Human Rights Centre, Lifespark, Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, Ligue ivoirienne des Droits de l'Homme, Lutte Pour la Justice, City of Matera, MEDEL, Mothers Against Death Penalty, Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples, National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, National Lawyers Guild, Nigerian Humanist Movement, Observatoire marocain des prisons, Observatoire National des Prisons, Ordine Provinciale dei Medici-Chirurghi e degli odontoiatri di Firenze, Ordre des avocats du Barreau de Liège, Ordre des avocats des Hauts de Seine, Ordre des Barreaux francophones et germanophones de Belgique, Organisation marocaine des droits humains, Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Pax Christi Uvira asbl, People of Faith Against the Death Penalty, Puerto Rican Coalition against the Death Penalty, RADHOMA, City of Reggio Emilia, Rights and Democracy, ROTAB, Stop Child Executions, Union Chrétienne pour le Progrès et la Défense des Droits de l'Homme, Unis pour l'abolition de la peine de mort, US Human Rights Network, City of Venice, Victorian Criminal Justice Coalition, Women's Information Consultative Center, World Organisation against Torture.

THE DEATH PENALTY FACTS AND FIGURES

[1] ABOLITIONIST AND NON-ABOLITIONIST COUNTRIES

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

- **94** countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes;
- **10** countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes except extraordinary crimes such as those committed in times of war;
- **35** countries are *de facto* abolitionists: the death penalty is still provided for in legislation but no executions have been carried out for at least ten years.

Therefore, **139** countries have abolished the death penalty *de jure* or *de facto*.

However, **58** countries and territories still uphold the death penalty and use this punishment. That said, 'only' **25** countries carried out executions in 2008.

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

Since 1990 more than **54** countries have abolished capital punishment for all crimes: in **Africa** (recent examples include Togo and Burundi); the **Americas** (Canada, Mexico, Paraguay and Argentina); **Asia-Pacific** (Bhutan, the Philippines and Samoa); and **Europe and the South Caucasus** (Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Montenegro, Turkey and Uzbekistan).

[3] DEATH SENTENCES AND EXECUTIONS

During 2008 at least **2,390** prisoners were executed in **25** countries and **8,864** people were sentenced to death in **52** countries. These figures only reflect cases of which Amnesty International was aware and the actual number is certainly higher.

In 2008 **93%** of executions registered took place in China, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United States.

[China]

Amnesty International estimates that China executed at least **1,718** people during the course of the year 2008 but the actual number is probably far higher and the US-based organization "Dui Hua Foundation" estimates it to be around 6,000 people. Official national statistics on the application of capital punishment remain a state secret. It is therefore very difficult to obtain real, reliable information on the situation of the death penalty in the country.

[Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia]

According to Amnesty International's information Iran executed at least **346** people (almost twice as many as in 2006 and four times as many as 2005), Pakistan **36** people and about **7,000** inmates are on death row, including children and Saudi Arabia at least **102**. But the true number could be higher.

[United States of America]

In the United States 9 States carried out executions in **2008**, taking the lives of **37** people (compared to 42 in 2007, 53 in 2006 and 60 in 2005), therefore bringing the total number of people executed since capital punishment was reinstated in 1977 to 1,136.

Further, between September 2007 and April 2008, there was a *de facto* moratorium in the United States following the seizure of the Supreme Court to establish whether the practice of lethal injection, used by 36 federal States, complied with the Constitution or not. The Supreme Court decided that lethal injections did not break the 8th Amendment protecting citizens against any “*cruel and unusual punishment*”. 37 executions then took place within 8 months, between May and December 2008.

For the **2009** first semester, the USA have already executed **35** people.

On 18 May 2009, the State of New Mexico has abolished the death penalty. It is the 15th abolitionist State in this country.

[4] METHODS OF EXECUTION

Since 2000 the following methods have been used:

- **decapitation** (Saudi Arabia);
- **electrocution** (United States);
- **hanging** (Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Pakistan, Singapore, ...);
- **lethal injection** (China, United States, Guatemala, Thailand);
- **execution by firing squad** (Belarus, China, Somalia, Vietnam, ...);
- **stoning** (Afghanistan, Iran).

[5] USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY AGAINST JUVENILE OFFENDERS

International human rights treaties 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*.

More than **100 countries** which still uphold capital punishment for some crimes expressly forbid the execution of juvenile offenders in their legislation, or should exclude this sort of execution as they are party to one of other of these treaties. However, a small number of countries continue to execute juvenile offenders.

In 2007 a total of ten child offenders were executed: eight in Iran, one in Saudi Arabia and one in **Yemen**. In 2008, at least 8 juveniles were executed in **Iran** according to Amnesty International and at least 140 others were believed to be on death row. For the first semester of 2009, at least five juveniles have been executed: three in Iran and two in **Saudi Arabia**. In **Sudan**, four 17 year olds are currently reported to be on trial for alleged participation in the Khartoum attacks, while one 17 year old and one reported 16 year old were sentenced to death in July and August 2008, according to the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Sudan.

[6] INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS SUPPORTING ABOLITION

One important aspect of the progress which has been made recently is the adoption of international treaties through which States pledge not to use capital punishment:

- **Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**, which aims to abolish the death penalty and has been ratified by 71 States. 3 other countries have signed the Protocol, thereby signalling their intention to become party to this instrument at a later date;
- **Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights on the abolition of the death penalty**, which has been ratified by 11 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 41 European States and signed by 4 others.

The object 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.