



Ratification Kit

Zambia

Why is it important for Zambia to accede to the United Nations Protocol to abolish the death penalty?

Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema signed into law Penal Code (Amendment) Bill number 25 in December 2022, which abolishes the death penalty for ordinary crimes. Before that, Zambia was an abolitionist country in practice and the last execution took place in 1997.

Ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is extremely important, both nationally and locally, because it is the only text with worldwide reach aiming to abolish the death penalty.

Acceding to the Protocol is a very symbolic act, reflecting the universal trend towards abolition of capital punishment, considered to be cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

It is essential that the world's abolitionist countries, in law or in practice, ratify this Protocol.

What are the international commitments already taken by Zambia to accede to the Protocol?

Zambia abstained for the **nine UN General Assembly resolutions for a moratorium on** the use of the death penalty in 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2022.

Zambia participated to the fourth cycle of the **Universal Periodic Review** of the **Human Rights Council** in January 2023. During the UPR session, Zambia received 15 recommendations aiming at the ratification of the Protocol and will provide an answer on the status of these recommendations no later than the June 2023 Human Rights Council session.

The **Committee against Torture** invited in **2008** the State party to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR.

In its **Concluding Observations** in **2023**, the **Committee on the Rights of the Child** recommended that the State ratify the Protocol.

What are the steps to be taken as regards internal law?

According to Article 7.3 of the Protocol, it “shall be open to accession by any State that has ratified the Covenant or acceded to it.”

Zambia ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1984 and it is therefore competent to accede to this Protocol.

Among the obligations incumbent upon Zambia following accession to the Protocol are the **prohibition of executions and withdrawal of the death penalty from internal criminal law**.

What are the legal obstacles to accession?

There is **no legal obstacle** as Zambia is an abolitionist country for ordinary crimes and as the last execution took place in 1997.

We therefore encourage Zambia to accede to the Protocol as soon as possible.

How can accession to the Protocol be applied?

The Protocol shall come into force three months after the instruments of accession have been deposited with the UN Secretary General (Article 8.2 of the Protocol).

According to Article 3 of the Protocol, Zambia must submit reports to the Human Rights Committee covering the measures it has adopted to give effect to the Protocol.

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty also encourages Zambia to support the adoption of an **African Protocol** on the abolition of the death penalty.

For more information, contact the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and visit its website: <https://worldcoalition.org/campagne/just-one-more-step-ratifying-international-and-regional-protocols/>