

**2022 WORLD DAY AGAINST THE  
DEATH PENALTY REPORT**

**DEATH PENALTY:  
A ROAD PAVED  
WITH TORTURE**

**10 OCTOBER 2022**

**20<sup>TH</sup> WORLD DAY  
AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY**

[www.worldcoalition.org](http://www.worldcoalition.org)

**WORLD  
COALITION**  
AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

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## FOREWORD

Why choose torture as this year's World Day Against the Death Penalty theme? Understanding the link between torture and the death penalty and the impact of 20 World Days.

The aim of the **World Coalition Against the Death Penalty** ('World Coalition') is to reinforce the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Its ultimate objective is to achieve universal abolition of the death penalty. In countries where the death penalty is applied, the World Coalition is working to reduce its use, for example through the supporting and invoking the respect for international human rights standards. Since the creation of the World Coalition in 2002, significant progress towards the universal abolition of the death penalty has been achieved. Numerous States that have maintained the death penalty have abolished it in practice or have since restricted its use.

Observed every 10 October, the **World Day Against the Death Penalty** ('World Day') unifies the global abolitionist movement and mobilizes civil society, political leaders, lawyers, public opinion and more to support the call for universal abolition of capital punishment. The day encourages and consolidates the political and general awareness of the world-wide movement against the death penalty.

In 2022, the World Day had a dual focus. First was the theme, dedicated to reflecting on the **relationship between the use of the death penalty and torture or other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment**. The types of torture and other ill-treatment experienced during the long death penalty road are varied and numerous: physical or psychological torture has been applied in many cases during questioning to force confessions to capital crimes; death row phenomenon contributes to the long-term psychological decline of a person's health; harsh death row living conditions contribute to physical deterioration; mental anguish of anticipating execution; methods of execution that cause exceptional pain, and the suffering experienced by family members and those with a close relationship with the executed person. Discriminations based on sex, gender, poverty, age, sexual orientation, religious and ethnic minority status, and others can compound cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of individuals sentenced to death.

The second focus the celebration of the **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Day** by the World Coalition and its members. As the 20<sup>th</sup> World Day Against the Death Penalty was marked around the world, now is a time to consider and celebrate the gains the abolitionist movement has made over the past 20 years.

Now, more than ever, abolitionist actors need to continue working towards the complete abolition of the death penalty worldwide, for all crimes. Here's to another 20 years of World Days and anti-death penalty awareness raising and activism.

## I. Dual Main Objectives: Both to Raise Public Awareness on the Link between the Death Penalty and Torture to convince people that the Death Penalty should be abolished and to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> World Day Against the Death Penalty

### 1. Institutional Resonance of the 20<sup>th</sup> World Day

One of the main objectives of World Day 2022 was to raise awareness on the link between the death penalty and torture or other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment (CIDTP). Numerous intergovernmental, international, and national institutions publicly expressed their opposition towards the death penalty and torture, creating international resonance. Different angles on understanding torture and CIDTP and the death penalty created an international ricochet in different languages and country contexts.

Many public statements were issued either on World Day or in the days surrounding the 10<sup>th</sup> October. Joint declarations marking the World Day and its theme, issued by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs on behalf of the **European Union (EU)** and the Secretary General of the **Council of Europe (CE)** were distributed on several EU websites, such as the Delegation of the European Union to Vietnam and to the People's Republic of China, both retentionist countries. It was on average translated into 24 languages, including languages of retentionist countries such as Arabic, Belarussian, Vietnamese, and Farsi.

A statement by the **United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**, Alice Edwards, and the **UN Special Rapporteur on Extra-judicial summary or arbitrary executions**, Morris Tidball-Binz was published which jointly addressed the relationship between the death penalty and the absolute prohibition against torture and other CIDTP.

Honorable Commissioner Idrissa Sow of the **African Commission of Human's and People's Rights (ACHPR)** released a statement which stated that the World Day is an opportunity to reflect on the progress made towards universal abolition, the road still to travel for complete abolition, while highlighting the link between the death penalty and torture, in the process of applying this penalty.

At least 10 State governments representing abolitionist countries for all crimes or in practice, including **Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Kingdom of Morocco, Slovenia, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom**, released publications conveying their commitment to the international abolitionist cause on World Day 2022. Ambassador Raphael Naegeli from Switzerland (on behalf of the UK and other OSCE<sup>1</sup> states), Honorable Mélanie Joly - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada - and German Human Rights Commissioner Luise Amtsberg, among others, took World Day to express their stance representative of their country against the death penalty. Also on the national level, Hina Jilani, Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission in **Pakistan** published a statement in which she demonstrates that the application of capital punishment in Pakistan amounts to torture.

At the end of October 2022, Richard Branson, a British entrepreneur and founder of the Virgin Group, tweeted criticism towards Singapore's execution policies, and was subsequently invited for a televised debate by Singaporean authorities, but declined by saying that this opportunity should be given to local activists, pressuring Singapore to listen to their own citizens and experts on the topic.

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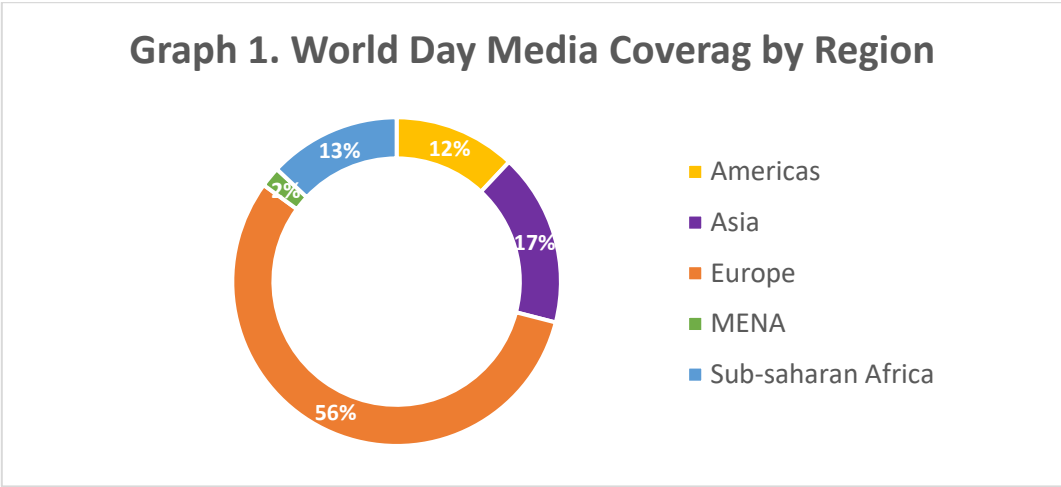
<sup>1</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

## 2. Awareness Raising Work Undertaken by the World Coalition

- The World Coalition used Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to carry out a **ten-day social media campaign**, which featured statistics and facts about abolitionist progress, as well as testimonies from people sentenced to death or affected by someone dear to them sentenced to death.
- The World Coalition shared a **social media toolkit** with members to use text and images for their own social media campaigns.
- The World Coalition released a **Joint Declaration** (see Annex) on the Death Penalty dedicated the death penalty and human rights of women and LGBTQIA+ individuals. It was co-signed by 59 organizations in total.
- The World Coalition distributed their **Mobilization Kit and World Day 2022 tools** for the 20<sup>th</sup> World Day to member organizations and abolitionist partners, both digitally and sending out physical packages of printed materials.
- The World Coalition developed and distributed a **20<sup>th</sup> World Day Anniversary tool**, aimed at reflecting and celebrating the last 20 years of World Day achievements.
- The World Coalition dedicated its **newsletter** in July 2022 to calling for action on World Day and spreading awareness amongst its networks.
- The World Coalition launched an **information-sharing campaign on WhatsApp** amongst African member-organizations.

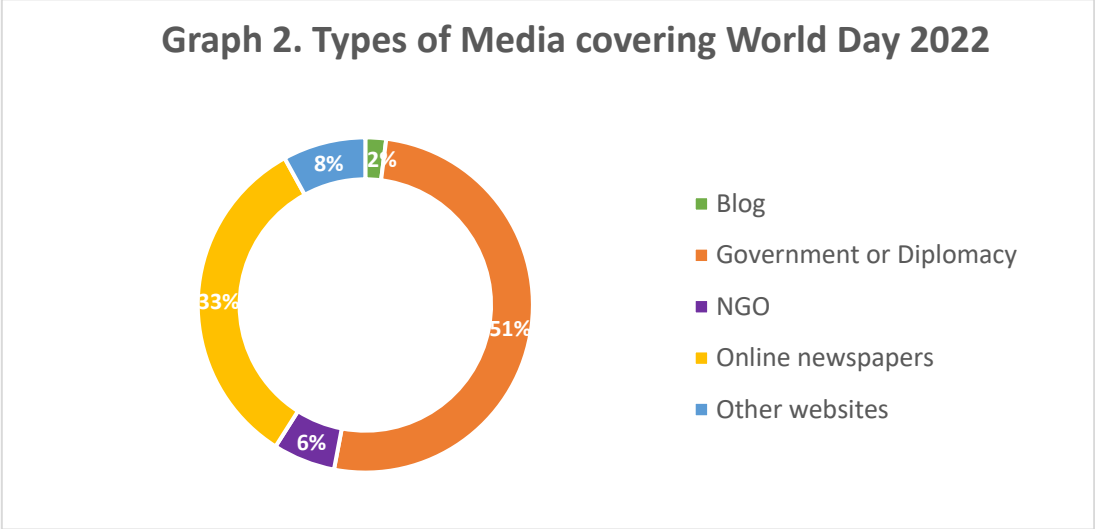
## 3. Media Coverage of World Day 2022

The World Day Against the Death Penalty this year received enormous media attention as it celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The World Day was mentioned in **982 articles in 80 countries** and in **101 languages** throughout the world (see Graph 1. for regional breakdown). English was the most used language, followed by French and Spanish. Some public statements such as the press release of the Council of the European Union were released in multiple languages as a translation tool was made available on the website, enabling people to read the statement in on average 24 different languages.



The types of media that reported on World Day were categorized into NGO reports, governmental reports, online articles (from traditional news outlets), websites and blogs (see Graph 2 for the breakdown in media coverage). Governmental reports represented the largest number of articles, with

501 recorded, followed by 321 online articles. However, as the search for articles was largely carried out via desk research conducted online, there is a potential swath of traditional print and radio media that has not been accounted for. While World Coalition members provided scans of newspapers, which have been integrated into the overall statistics, this is not where the bulk of research was done.



**4. Social Media Coverage of the 2022 World Day**

The World Coalition held a ten-day campaign on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> October until 10 October 2022. The posts included statistics and facts about torture and capital punishment, as well as abolitionist progress and testimonies. On 10 October 2022, World Day-related reactions were tracked live on Twitter by the World Coalition’s Secretariat. As it was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Day, World Day received plenty of social media attention, by people posting, reposting or starting their own campaign. The highest-ranking post came from Pope Francis, representing the Catholic Church (see Image 1).

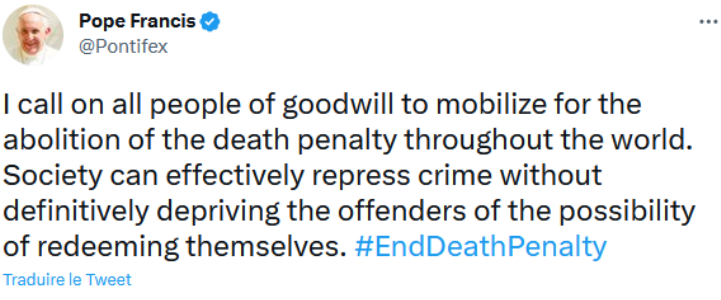


Image 1. Screen shot of the tweet from Pope Francis’s Twitter account on 10/10/2023.

Having led 20 years of World Day, the World Coalition and its Secretariat have evolved and adapted how they have tracked events and activities to compile the World Day Report. In 2002, the World Day was very different in its scope and recognition as compared to 2022. Additionally, the use of social media in awareness raising

campaigns like the World Day has had a colossal impact both in how World Day is organized, and tracked but also how people interact with the World Day. In many ways the World Coalition is still trying to perfect how social media statistics are incorporated into the research and how those statistics are understood in the broader movement. For the past 3 years, every tweet or post was considered an

action or activity<sup>2</sup> as many posts were prepared in advance and published to show solidarity on the World Day Against the Death Penalty. This may be subject to change, particularly as best practices are applied in how to incorporate social media statistics into the World Day campaign. In general, social media is a relatively new tool for activists, and as such understanding and including its wide-reaching scope is still part of a learning process. However, especially in 2022, the overwhelming amount of social media engagement illustrates its importance to include in following the impact of the World Day.

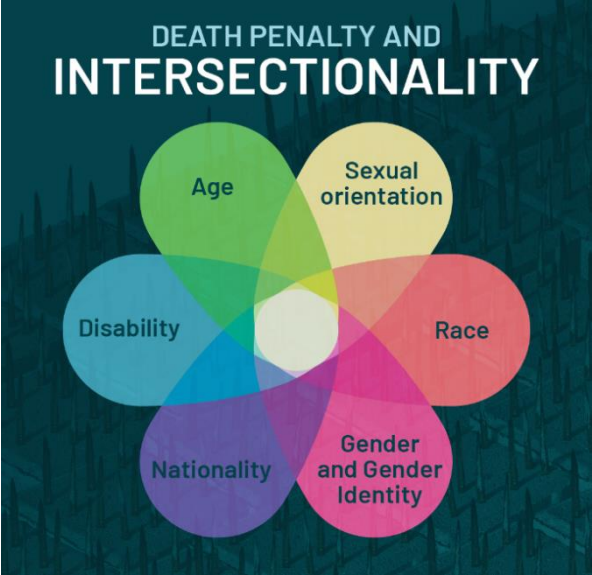


Image 2. Image posted on the World Coalition’s Instagram account on Day 9 of the social media campaign.

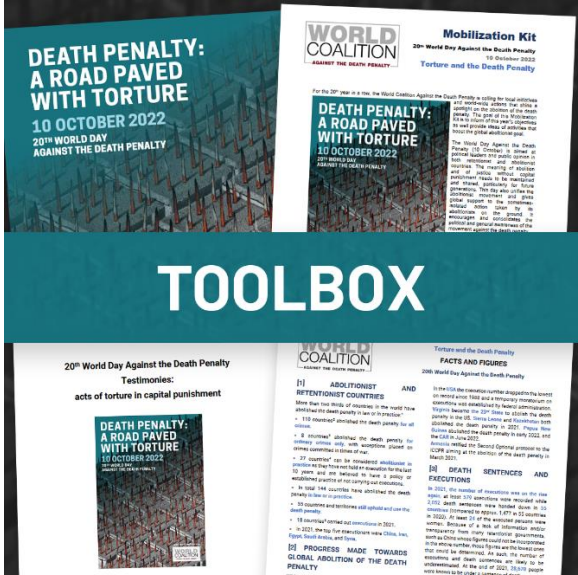
On **Instagram**, the World Coalition gained 25 new followers and recorded 170 profile visits over the span of 10 days. One of the most popular posts was on Day 9 of the campaign, discussing women’s rights, the lack thereof within capital punishment and intersectionality (see Image 2). The post reached 123 accounts, garnered 34 likes and was reposted 22 times.

The World Coalition **Facebook** page received a 66.7% increase in likes and follows (compared to the period prior to the campaign which started on 1 October), with a reach of 4,588 accounts. Furthermore, 821 visits were recorded on the Facebook page in the beginning of October with a peak of over 400 on World Day. The post that resonated the most, reaching over 1,400 accounts, acquiring 52 likes and reactions and shared 27 was the final post, announcing World Day with an image

of the 2023 World Day poster (the cover of this report).

According to a 28-day summary on **Twitter**, there were 152,00 tweet impressions<sup>3</sup>, 2,577 profile visits, 103 new followers and 52 mentions. The top tweet was Day 3 of the World Coalition’s campaign, sharing the World Day toolbox which earned 551 impressions.

This year’s World Day was also celebrated on **YouTube**, with **21 videos** published for World Day. The YouTube videos included news clips, documentaries, statements, and interviews that focused on the theme of the World Day and more general abolition sentiment in general.



<sup>2</sup> See page XX for the definitions used for event.  
<sup>3</sup> The number of times content, whether a post or a story, was shown to users.

Image 3. Image posted on the World Coalition's Twitter account on Day 3 of the social media campaign.

## 5. WhatsApp campaign

The World Coalition's Secretariat has launched a small **WhatsApp campaign** since 2020 for interested members and partners based on the African continent. Given WhatsApp's omnipresence on the continent and the space it occupies in sharing information, for 3 years the World Coalition has drafted a short message on World Day and has included a variety of PDF tools to be shared within the World Coalition's African WhatsApp network.

In 2022, WhatsApp messages were sent to WhatsApp groups that the World Coalition maintains as well as to individuals for a total of 23 English speakers and 29 French speakers. This makes a total of 52 participants who received WhatsApp messages in 17 countries (**Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo Brazza, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda**). The impact, however, of this campaign is nearly impossible to accurately measure. The structure of WhatsApp allows for messages to be sent, but little idea if those messages have been reposted, and if so, how many times. The World Coalition can assume that this campaign does reach a larger number of people than the original group who received it. For example, member-organization Rescue Alternatives Liberia, self-reported having shared the message with 20 other people in their networks, to colleagues in Liberia, but also Ghana.

WhatsApp text message sent to participants in 2022:

*"Today is the 20<sup>th</sup> World Day Against the Death Penalty!*

*This year's World Day is dedicated to exploring the link between torture and the use of the death penalty, at all stages of the death penalty.*

*Prohibited under international law and in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, torture is present at every stage of the death penalty. It is present during interrogations to obtain forced confessions, it is the result of the conditions of detention, it is inherent to certain methods of execution, and it extends to the relatives of the condemned, the families, the lawyers, the prison guards, etc.*

*This year the World Day poster is available in 19 languages, including in Swahili, Hausa, Lingala, Luganda, Arabic, French, and English! Please share this message with your networks. 2 African nations have already abolished the death penalty in 2022 – who will be next?"*

## II. Supporting Advocacy by Creating and Sharing Mobilization Tools

### 1. Creating and Sharing World Day Tools

To raise awareness and mobilize people and organizations around the world, the World Coalition created information and mobilization toolkits which were made available to members, partners and anyone who was interested in being active on World Day. The tool packs were available upon request and could be downloaded from the World Coalition's website. All tools were made available at least in **French** and in **English**.



- World Day Poster 2022 (additionally available in **Arabic, Farsi, German, Houssa, Italian, Japanese, Lingala, Luganda, Russian Simplified Chinese, Sinhala, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, Traditional Chinese, Turkish and Urdu**)
- Informational leaflet (additionally available in **Arabic**)
- Detailed Factsheet World Day 2022
- Facts and Figures 2022
- Mobilization Kit World Day 2022
- Testimonies Tool World Day 2022
- World Day Report 2021
- Anniversary Tool 20th World Day (additionally available in **Arabic**)
- UN Special Procedures Toolkit World Day 2022

## 2. Tool Distribution

In total, between July and September 2022, **770 envelopes and parcels** were sent around the world; overall **2,810** posters and **5,108** leaflets in English and in French were distributed. In addition to the French and English tools, an additional **745** posters in Arabic, Hausa, Lingala, Luganda, and Swahili were either ordered and sent to World Coalition membership or local printing costs were reimbursed in DRC, Mauritania, Nigeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Uganda.

As indicated previously, all World Day tools were included on the webpage<sup>4</sup> of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty for the 2022 World Day. The tools were available to download free of charge. According to the website analytics of the World Coalition webpage, during 1-10 October period, **7,355 users** connected to the website, and the World Day page had over **12,433 combined views**. A few other statistics can be noted below for the same time period:

- **2,277 users** visited the World Day page in **English**, **415 users** visited the World Day page in **French**, **167** to the World Day page in **Spanish**, **61** to the World Day page in **Arabic**, and **40** to the World Day page in **Farsi**.
- **170 users** visited the Take Action page in **English** and **75** in **French** (with the interactive events map)
- The Facts + Figures downloadable page was viewed **89 times** in **English** and **52** in **French**.

Lastly, in November 2023, a survey was conducted in which World Coalition members evaluated and were asked to give thorough feedback on the World Day. According to the survey, the most useful tools and documents were the **poster, facts and figures sheet, detailed factsheet, 20<sup>th</sup> World Day anniversary tool, and the testimonies tool**.

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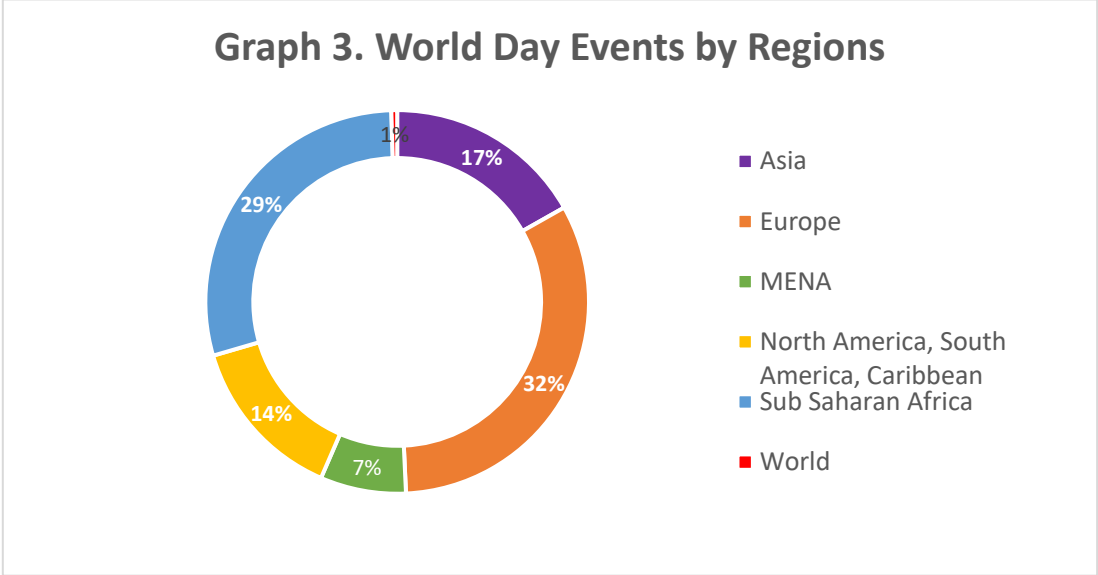
<sup>4</sup> <https://worldcoalition.org/campagne/20th-world-day-against-the-death-penalty/>

### III. Encouraging the Organization of Local Initiatives and Strengthening Abolitionist Society

#### 1. Breakdown of World Day 2022 Events

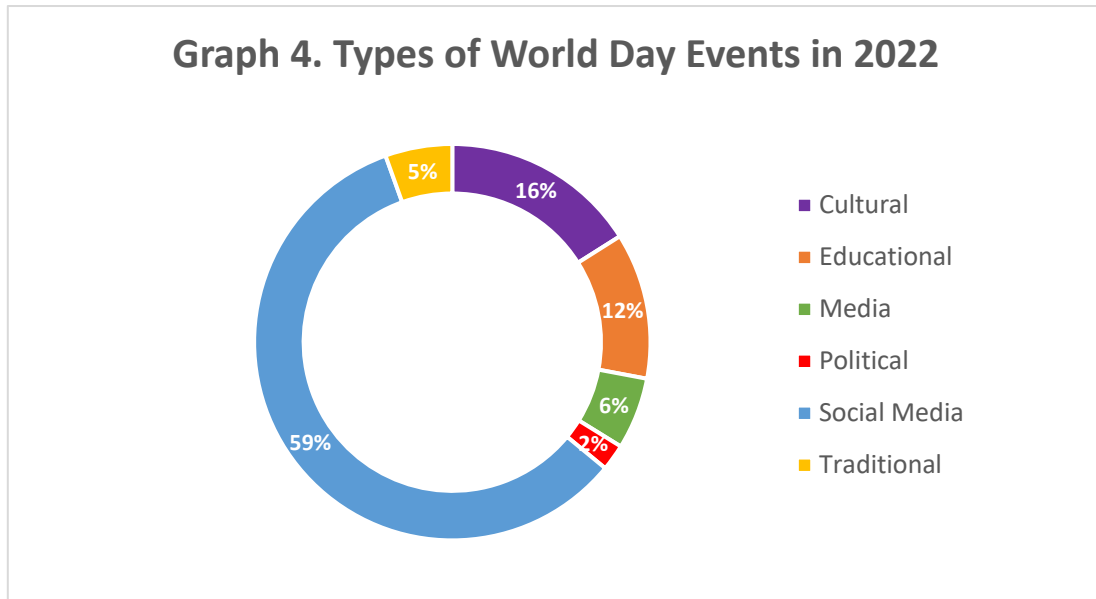
The 20<sup>th</sup> World Day recorded **1,023 events**<sup>5</sup> around the world in **64 countries**. While this represents more activities than in 2021 (741 events), it does represent fewer countries than 2021 (98 countries). The global breakdown of events is featured in Graph 3.

Events were divided into cultural<sup>6</sup>, educational<sup>7</sup>, media<sup>8</sup>, social media<sup>9</sup>, political<sup>10</sup> and traditional events<sup>11</sup> (see Graph 4). The social media category is a new category that has been added to the understanding and breakdown of events. Most events were social media events with 599 detected posts. Afterwards cultural events with 164 events followed which means that creating events such as art shows, exhibitions and movie screenings were very popular around the globe. Traditional events (56), such as gatherings and protests and educational (122) events, such as webinars, roundtables and reports were also often organized. Media events (60) and political events (22) were also prevalent.



<sup>5</sup> World Day Events can be held by a wide variety of stakeholders: NGOs, legal firms, governments, international regional and institutions, etc.  
<sup>6</sup> Cultural events include film screenings, theatre plays, art exhibitions, etc.  
<sup>7</sup> Educational events include school visits, round tables, various types of publications, workshops, etc.  
<sup>8</sup> Media events include press conferences, and contributing to the media coverage of World Day, etc.  
<sup>9</sup> Social media events include social media campaigns, social media posts, messages or tweets, and live streaming on social media platforms  
<sup>10</sup> Political events include advocacy meetings, meeting with institutional and governmental bodies.  
<sup>11</sup> Traditional events include sit-ins, petitions, demonstrations, etc

**Graph 4. Types of World Day Events in 2022**



## **2. Worldwide Mobilization**

### **Americas**

There were at least 142 events in North America that took place in the USA and Canada.

Witness to Innocence launched the “Ohio Innocence Tour” in which exonerees toured five different locations to speak about their experience with the criminal justice system and capital punishment to create awareness about the realities of these systems. The Advocates for Human Rights focused on an event that discussed how to use international advocacy to promote legal reforms.

In the Caribbean, there were activities in Trinidad and Tobago. Greater Caribbean for Life (GCL) hosted a webinar, during which GCL panelists stated, “World Day gives [us] an opportunity not only to reflect on progress over the past 20 years, but to renew our resolve to work towards the abolition of the death penalty regionally and globally.”

### **Asia**

Out of the 172 events in Asia, 13 different countries were represented.

Asia had very diverse and creative events, some also collaborating with different organizations and institutions from different continents, such as Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN, Malaysia). In collaboration with Eleos Justice (Australia), ADPAN also created an art exhibition, titled “Journey to Death Row” with an interactive session. They held other events focusing mainly on the youth in which they gave them the chance to express themselves, such as through poetry slams and art competitions. The Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty created a film festival called ‘The State vs You and Me’ in which international movies regarding the death penalty were shown. Justice Project Pakistan (JPP) created an acclaimed theatre play called “Limbo” in which letters from incarcerated people on death row were presented. The Transformative Justice Collective (TJC, Singapore) organized four mini lectures which addressed how the death penalty upholds oppression. Project 39A, National Law

University Delhi organized an event called “Sexual Violence and the Death Penalty” in which the executive director of Project 39A, Anup Surendranath discusses the needs of survivors. They also posted a tweet linking the World Day Against the Death Penalty with the World Mental Health Day, “The psychological pain and suffering of living with the sentence of death amounts to torture. How can we promise mental health & well-being for all without addressing the torture inflicted on persons on death row? [#WorldMentalHealthDay](#) [#WorldDayAgainstDeathPenalty](#)”

In Oceania, events were organized in Australia and New Zealand. Capital Punishment Justice Project (CPJP, Australia) invited Kylie Gilbert-Moore for a hybrid discussion about her experience as a former Even prison detainee, a prison located in Iran which is known for housing political prisoners and its human rights violations. The EU Delegation of Australia, Eleos Justice (Monash University), The Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research (Griffith University) and the Australian National University discussed the politics of death penalty abolition from an interdisciplinary perspective, including historical, legal and political, domestic and international point of views. Furthermore, the UN Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial summary or arbitrary executions also highlighted the relationship between the use of the death penalty and torture.

## Europe

Out of the 332 events in Europe, 19 different countries were represented.

The German Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty focused their World Day event on what torture entails by giving imprisoned people in the USA a voice to express what torture means for them in forms of essays and artwork. Here, the inhumane detention conditions on death row were mostly discussed, such as solitary confinement, the lack of hygienic conditions and medical inefficiency. Lifespark (Switzerland) promoted becoming a ‘penpal’ to people who are incarcerated. Harm Reduction International (HRI, UK) spread awareness on the relation between the death penalty and global drug policies which are against international human rights standards.

In Italy, Commune di Vecchiano organized a public debate with academics on the theme of the death penalty. In France, ACAT Merignac held multiple in person events, including roundtables on the theme of death penalty and torture, as well as an intervention that aired on the radio.

## Middle East and North Africa

Out of 74 events, 13 different countries were represented.

Human Rights Morocco, the Norway Embassy in Egypt and Libya and EU delegation in Egypt all took Twitter to their hand to express their stance against the death penalty on World Day. Moreover, A24 News Agency EN in Tunisia published their recorded radio show on YouTube in which listeners could hear the Tunisian Coalition’s call for abolition of the death penalty. The Tunisian Coalition against the Death Penalty was very active last year, and organized a press conference on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, focusing on the prevalence of executions in Tunisia despite the moratorium. They also held a 3-day seminar on the theme of death penalty and torture, as well as youth forum in collaboration with Les Artistes and ECPM (Ensemble contre la peine de mort or Together Against the Death Penalty). In

Turkey, SOHRAM-CASRA<sup>12</sup> organized a press conference on the relations between death and torture, as well as information sessions on the damages of death penalty on societies. In Palestine, Addameer published a statement regarding the death sentences issues by courts in Gaza.

Iran Human Rights (IHR) provided information and statistics on the current situation in Iran, whereas Amnesty Iran tweeted “Iran is the world's second most prolific executioner after China. The Iranian authorities are increasingly using the death penalty as a weapon of political repression against protesters, dissidents & members of ethnic minorities. [#WorldDayAgainstTheDeathPenalty](#)”

## Sub Saharan Africa

Out of the 297 events that were taken place in Africa, 16 different countries were represented.

Some organizations used the World Day to provide training to ensure that certain skills can be acquired for promoting change and doing advocacy. Avocats Sans Frontières (France) focused on training lawyers in Abuja regarding capital punishment. Penal Reform International (Uganda) created a moot court competition. Pax Christi Uvira (RDC), RADHOMA (RDC), Culture pour la Paix et la Justice (RDC), ACAT Mali and Observatoire Burundais des Prisons (Burundi) all organized conference debates.

Social media events include tweets by the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (Uganda) who let their followers be part of their in-person event in which a meeting between the members of the East African Coalition Against the Death Penalty was held, by posting pictures and quotes from speeches. Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC, Tanzania) Executive Director Anna Henge was [quoted](#) saying “The #deathpenalty violates basic human rights & is a morally reprehensible mechanism of punishment for a civilized society to maintain. The death penalty does not deter crime.”

## VI. Annexes

### 1. About the World Coalition

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, an alliance of more than 160 NGOs, bar associations, local authorities and unions, was created in Rome on 13 May 2002. It was founded as a result of the commitment made by the signatories of the Final Declaration of the 1st World Congress against the Death Penalty organised by the French NGO Together Against the Death Penalty (ECPM) in Strasbourg in June 2001.

The aim of the World Coalition is to strengthen the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Its ultimate objective is to obtain the universal abolition of the death penalty. To achieve its goal, the World Coalition advocates for a definitive end to death sentences and executions in those countries where the death penalty is in force. In some countries, it is seeking to obtain a reduction in the use of capital punishment as a first step towards abolition. **Since 2003, the Coalition established the 10th of October as the World Day against the Death Penalty.**

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<sup>12</sup> Sosyal Yardımlaşma Rehabilitasyon ve Adaptasyon Merkezi or Social Assistance Rehabilitation and Adaptation Center

## 2. Link to list of all members

Please find a complete list of all World Coalition members on our website, available here:

<https://worldcoalition.org/who-we-are/member-organizations/>



[www.worldcoalition.org](http://www.worldcoalition.org)

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