



How to implement
GENDER RESPONSIVE
international abolitionist advocacy?



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How to implement gender responsive international abolitionist advocacy ?

Guidance on how to abolish the death penalty by recognizing intersectional discrimination faced by women and LGBTQ+ people in the application of the death penalty

This manual is part of a series of three manuals developed by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty as part of the "Gender and the Death Penalty" theme. Each manual addresses a specific aspect of integrating a gender-responsive approach into abolitionist initiatives:

MANUAL 1

What are we referring to when we talk about gender discrimination in capital punishment?



MANUAL 2

How to implement gender-responsive international abolitionist advocacy?

MANUAL 3

How to integrate a gender-responsive approach into abolitionist efforts at national level?

These manuals are designed to provide practical tools for civil society organizations engaged in the struggle to abolish the death penalty.

By the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty
and the Advocates for Human Rights

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Abbreviations, acronyms & definitions

ACHPR

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

ACHR

American Convention on Human Rights

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CND

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

CSO

Civil society organization

CSW

Commission on the Status of Women

ECHR

European Convention on Human Rights

ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

GR

General Recommendation (as in CEDAW
General Recommendations)

ICCPR

International Covenant on Civil
and Political Rights

IWRAW

International Women's Rights Action Watch

LGBTQ+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer
and others

LOI

List of Issues

LOIPR

List of Issues Prior to Reporting

NGO

Non-Governmental Organization

UN

United Nations

UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

ALL THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ARE FROM THE WORLD COALITION'S GENDER AND DEATH PENALTY GLOSSARY

Gender-based discrimination

Any distinction, exclusion, or restriction with respect to a person or group of persons, based on gender, that “has the effect or purpose of impairing, or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise” of human rights of that person or group of persons. This includes discrimination based on gender, gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender.

Gender-based violence

Violence directed towards a person based on their gender, gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender, which is often grounded in unequal power relations. It encompasses physical, psychological, emotional, administrative, economic, sexual, verbal, and economic harm, and it includes threats and coercion. As most victims/survivors of gender-based violence are women and girls, the expression “gender-based violence” is often utilized to refer to violence against women. However, people of all genders can be victims of gender-based violence. The term is also used to describe violence against LGBTQ+ people, when referencing violence related to norms of masculinity, femininity and/or gender norms.

Gender responsive advocacy

Advocacy that recognizes the different needs and inequalities between women, men, boys, girls and people of other genders, and actively addresses these inequalities through targeted advocacy actions to promote gender equality and inclusion. For abolitionist advocacy, we consider that this involves recognizing the gender biases inherent in the application of capital punishment and the specific realities faced by women and LGBTQ+ individuals exposed to the death penalty, while actively working to combat these discriminatory acts and, more broadly, to enhance protection and address the needs of these populations. This type of action goes beyond gender-sensitive actions that merely acknowledge the specific reality of women and LGBTQ+ people without taking any steps to remedy it.

Intersectionality

A concept that refers to the intersection of different forms of structural discrimination, marginalization, and oppression. It does not simply refer to the accumulation of multiple discriminations but rather to how their interaction creates specific and distinct forms of oppression. For example, discrimination based on sex, gender, race, class, caste, or another identity, does not operate in isolation. As people may be subjected to one or more types of discrimination at the same time, an intersectional approach allows for a better understanding of the nature and form of discrimination encountered by a person.

LGBTQ+

Stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and other identities not specified. In this guide, we use the acronym LGBTQ+ to reflect the current understanding of gender-based discrimination in the application of the death penalty. So far, analyses have primarily focused on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals. This includes the imposition of the death penalty based on gender identity or sexual orientation, whether actual or perceived. However, the World Coalition acknowledges that intersex individuals and other sexual and gender minorities may also face the death penalty and encounter specific challenges related to their identity, which must be taken into account. Furthermore, throughout this guide, references are made to women and LGBTQ+ individuals, while recognizing the intersection between these categories. The term «woman» thus includes lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer women. To highlight the specific forms of discrimination faced by sexual and gender minorities, the guide mentions these issues separately.

Foreword

UNTIL RECENTLY, THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT FAILED TO EXAMINE GENDER BIAS IN THE APPLICATION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

The low proportion of women sentenced to death (around 5% on average) and the lack of data on LGBTQ+ people facing this punishment have contributed to making these realities largely invisible. Yet, as Agnès Callamard, UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, pointed out in 2018: “A human rights approach to capital punishment cannot be complete without a gender component.”¹

In 2018, the Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide (CCDPW) marked an important milestone with the publication of the report *Judged for More than Her Crime*, which offered the first insight into gender discrimination in the application of capital punishment, revealing that women face systemic gender discrimination at every stage of the criminal justice process, from arrest and sentencing to detention conditions on death row.

By shedding light on a hitherto ignored reality, this report paved the way for the abolitionist movement’s collective reflection, continuing with the 2021 World Day Against the Death Penalty, which focused on the invisible reality of women facing the death penalty. This World Day fostered a collective commitment to strengthening efforts to integrate a gender-sensitive approach into the abolitionist struggle.

Building on these advances, since 2022, in collaboration with the CCDPW and The Advocates for Human Rights (TAHR), the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (World Coalition) has been implementing a project that aims to promote an abolitionist struggle that recognizes the gender discrimination at work in capital punishment. In particular, the project aims to strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations to include a gender approach, strengthen links with movements and organizations defending

¹ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty* (A Report of the Alice Project), September 2018, p. 3, accessible at: <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/publication/judged-more-than-her-crime/>

the rights of women and gender and sexual minorities and strengthen the knowledge and motivation of United Nations Member States and abolitionist human rights organizations to advocate for a gender responsive approach to the abolition of the death penalty.

In this context, the World Coalition has developed three training manuals to guide the abolitionist movement in recognizing the intersectional discrimination suffered by women and LGBTQ+ people in the application of the death penalty. Designed as practical tools, each manual explores a specific aspect of integrating a gender-responsive approach into abolitionist initiatives.

The second manual of this guide *How to implement gender responsive international abolitionist advocacy?* developed with TAHR, provides an overview of how to conduct abolitionist advocacy with international human rights bodies, while highlighting the intersectional discrimination faced by women and LGBTQ+ people in the application of the death penalty. It focuses on practical tips for integrating gender issues into the mechanisms traditionally used by the abolitionist movement, while exploring how to jointly address gender and death penalty issues with mechanisms specializing in women's rights and the rights of sexual and gender minorities.

World Coalition Against the Death Penalty

Key international human rights standards for protecting women and LGBTQ+ people facing capital punishment

1. INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

GENERAL INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS

Prohibition against discrimination in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

The ICCPR prohibits discrimination by requiring States to ensure all rights are respected without distinction and guarantee equality before the law. Key provisions, such as Articles 2(1) and 26, mandate protection against discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status². The UN Human Rights Committee - the treaty body responsible for interpreting the ICCPR - defines this broadly to include direct and indirect discrimination, emphasizing that non-discrimination is a core principle of the Covenant³. The Human Rights Committee has clarified that the prohibition against discrimination based on sex includes a prohibition against discrimination based on sexual orientation⁴.

². International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted December 16, 1966, United Nations General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI), art. 2 and 26, UN Doc. A/6316, 1976, accessible at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/ccpr.pdf>

³. United Nations Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 18: Non-Discrimination, 1989, accessible at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=INT%2FCPR%2FGEC%2F6622&Lang=en

⁴. Human Rights Committee, Communication No. 488/1992, Toonen v. Australia, 1994, CCPR/C/50/D/488/1992, accessible at: <https://juris.ohchr.org/casedetails/702/en-US>

Limitation of the use of the death penalty

Article 6(2) of the ICCPR specifies that **the death penalty is permitted only for the “most serious crimes”**, interpreted by the Human Rights Committee as meaning only “intentional killing”.⁵ This excludes drug-related offences, blasphemy, witchcraft, as well as “crimes against morality” such as adultery or same-sex sexual activity.

The Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR (OP2 ICCPR), in force since July 11, 1991, is the **only universal treaty to abolish the death penalty, prohibiting its reintroduction in all circumstances.**

Prohibition against the death penalty for drug-related offenses

UN Human Rights Committee’s General Comment No. 36⁶, clarifies that drug offenses do not meet the threshold of “most serious crimes.”

The international legal framework governing the fight against drugs - based on three UN Conventions (1961, 1971, 1988) and the Palermo Convention (2000) - reiterates that States must punish drug trafficking with **appropriate penalties**, while respecting human rights and the rule of law. The UN Guidelines on Human Right and Drug Policy⁷ reaffirm that **the death penalty for these offences is contrary to human rights principles.**

UN Human Rights Committee’s General Comment No. 36

The term “the most serious crimes” must be read restrictively and appertain only to crimes of extreme gravity, involving intentional killing. Crimes not resulting directly and intentionally in death, such as attempted murder, corruption and other

economic and politica] crimes, armed robbery, piracy, abduction, drug and sexual offenses, although serious in nature, can never justify, within the framework of article 6, the imposition of the death penalty.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS THAT PROTECT WOMEN⁸ FACING THE DEATH PENALTY

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Adopted by the United Nations on December 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) **is the most important human rights treaty on women’s rights.** CEDAW

5. ICCPR, art. 6, UN Doc. A/6316, 1976.

6. United Nations Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36 on Article 6 (Right to Life), CCPR/C/GC/36, 2019, accessible at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/general-comment-no-36-article-6-right-life>

7. United Nations, United Nations International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy, March 2019, accessible at: <https://www.humanrights-drugpolicy.org>

8. These norms apply to all women, including those who identify as belonging to the LGBTQ+ community or are perceived as such. For the sake of clarity, a specific section has been devoted to standards that directly and explicitly target LGBTQ+ people (see next section).

establishes measures to achieve gender equality and it mandates that States Parties eliminate discrimination against women through legal, policy, and programmatic actions. CEDAW General Recommendations⁹ 19 (GR 19) and 35 (GR 35) provide essential guidance on eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence against women. GR 19¹⁰ recognizes gender-based violence as a form of discrimination and calls for comprehensive measures to prevent and address it while GR 35¹¹ updates GR 19 by expanding obligations for preventing violence and emphasizing that States must promote accountability and provide proactive support for survivors.



TO FIND OUT MORE

about the articles of the CEDAW Convention that protect women facing the death penalty, see the section *Work with the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee)*, page 24.

The Bangkok Rules

The UN General Assembly adopted the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (The Bangkok Rules) in December 2010. **These rules are the first comprehensive, international initiative to highlight and offer guidance in addressing the needs and requirements of women and girls in the criminal justice system.** The Bangkok Rules aim to establish a globally recognized standard for the treatment of women prisoners, providing guidance to prison authorities worldwide, particularly concerning gender-specific differences and the unaddressed needs of women. Among other things, the Bangkok Rules provide gender-sensitive advice on prison admission, security and search procedures, disciplinary procedures, training for prison staff, access for women prisoners to general and gender-specific physical and mental health care, training opportunities, and so on. Consequently, they set minimum standards for the conditions of detention that apply to women on death row (although the Bangkok Rules makes no specific mention of women on death row).

⁹. A CEDAW General Recommendation is an interpretive guide that clarifies how States should fulfil their obligations under the CEDAW treaty, offering specific advice on protecting women's rights.

¹⁰. United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation No. 19 on violence against women, CEDAW/C/1992/L.1/Add.15, 1992, accessible at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCE-DAW%2FGEC%2F3731&Lang=en

¹¹. United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, CEDAW/C/GC/35, 2017, accessible at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n17/231/54/pdf/n1723154.pdf>

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARDS THAT PROHIBIT
THE DEATH PENALTY
FOR CONSENSUAL SAME
SEX SEXUAL CONDUCTS
AND THAT PROHIBIT
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST
LGBTQ+ PEOPLE FACING
THE DEATH PENALTY

Standards established by the UN human rights mechanisms

Human Rights Committee

- **Communication No. 488/1992, Toonen v. Australia¹²** (1994) recognizes that the criminalization of same-sex sexual conduct violates the right to privacy and the right to equality before the law and is a form of prohibited discrimination based on sex.

- **General Comment No. 36 on ICCPR¹³ article 6** on the right to life (2019) recognizes that “under no circumstances can the death penalty ever be applied as a sanction against conduct the very criminalization of which violates the Covenant, including adultery, homosexuality, apostasy, establishing political opposition groups or offending a head of State. States parties that retain the death penalty for such offenses commit a violation of their obligations under article 6, read alone and in conjunction with article 2 (2) of the Covenant, as well as of other provisions of the Covenant”.

United Nations Human Rights Council

- **The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on the question of the death penalty¹⁴** (2017) condemning the imposition of the death penalty for consensual same-sex sexual conduct and urging States that have not yet abolished the death penalty to ensure that it is not imposed as a sanction for specific forms of conduct such as apostasy, blasphemy, adultery, and consensual same-sex conduct.

International principles: Yogyakarta principles

The Yogyakarta Principles, adopted in 2006, outline international human rights standards that governments must follow to respect protect and fulfill the human rights of LGBTQIA+ people. In 2017, these principles were updated as the Yogyakarta Principles plus 10 (Yogyakarta 10+)¹⁵. Among other issues, these principles recognize that international human rights standards prohibit the criminalization of consensual sexual activity between people of the same sex.

Principle 4 of the Yogyakarta principles

“Repeal all forms of crime that have the purpose or effect of prohibiting consensual sexual activity among persons of the same sex who are over the age of consent and, until such provisions are repealed, never impose the death penalty on any person convicted under them”.

¹². Human Rights Committee, Communication No. 488/1992, Toonen v. Australia, 1994, CCPR/C/50/D/488/1992.

¹³. United Nations Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36 on Article 6 (Right to Life), CCPR/C/GC/36, 2019

¹⁴. Human Rights Council, Resolution on the Question of the Death Penalty, A/HRC/RES/36/17, 2017, accessible at: <https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unhrc/2017/en/120677>

¹⁵. International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), The Yogyakarta Principles Plus 10 - Additional Principles and State Obligation on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics to Complement the Yogyakarta Principles, November 2017, accessible at: https://yogyakartaprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A5_yogyakartaWEB-2.pdf

2. REGIONAL STANDARDS

Regional treaties also provide a legal framework for the application of the death penalty, as well as for the right to non-discrimination, including on the basis of gender, and for the fight against gender-based violence. These treaties provide a solid foundation for gender sensitive and responsive abolitionist advocacy.

AFRICA



African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)

The ACHPR, adopted by the Organization of African Unity (now African Union) in 1981, enshrines the principles of non-discrimination on any grounds, including race, gender, and religion (Article 2), and equality before the law (Article 3), and calls for the elimination of discrimination against women and the protection of their rights (Article 18). While the Charter does not explicitly prohibit the death penalty, it upholds the right to life (Article 4)¹⁶.

Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)¹⁷ is a binding legal instrument adopted in 2003 to promote and protect the rights of women in Africa, addressing issues such as discrimination, violence, health, and socio-economic empowerment, and mandating measures to eliminate gender-based inequality.

AMERICAS



American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR)

The ACHR, adopted by the Organization of American States in 1969, prohibits discrimination on grounds such as race, color, sex, language, religion, and social origin (Article 1) and recognizes the right to life and restricts the use of the death penalty, including by limiting it to the "most serious crimes" (Article 4)¹⁸.

Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará)

The Convention of Belém do Pará¹⁹ is a binding treaty adopted by the Organization of American States in 1994 to address and combat violence against women in all its forms, recognizing such violence as a violation of human rights.

¹⁶. African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Adopted June 27, 1981, entered into force October 21, 1986. OAU Doc CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), available at: <https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights>

¹⁷. African Union, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003, available at: <https://au.int/en/treaties/protocol-african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights-rights-women-africa>

¹⁸. Organization of American States (OAS), American Convention on Human Rights ("Pact of San José, Costa Rica"), 1969, available at: https://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_b-32_american_convention_on_human_rights.pdf

¹⁹. Organization of American States, Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women («Convention of Belém do Pará»), 1994, available at: <https://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/convention.asp>

Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty:

The Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty²⁰ is a protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights, adopted in 1990, that aims to promote the abolition of the death penalty in the Americas, allowing its use only in times of war under strictly limited circumstances.

ASIA-PACIFIC



ASEAN Human Rights Declaration

The ASEAN Human Rights Declaration²¹ is a non-binding document adopted in 2012 by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) that outlines the commitment of Member States to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms. It underscores the principle of non-discrimination and equality, including based on gender (Articles 1 and 2). While it does not explicitly mention the death penalty, it upholds the right to life (Article 11).

EUROPE



European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

The ECHR, established under the Council of Europe in 1950 to protect fundamental freedoms and rights in Europe, prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of rights and freedoms (Article 14). Its protocol No. 6²² mandates the abolition of the death penalty for all offenses, with the sole exception of times of war or imminent threat of war, while Protocol No. 13²³ goes further, prohibiting the death penalty in all circumstances, including wartime, and preventing its reinstatement under any conditions, reflecting Europe's comprehensive commitment to the abolition of capital punishment.

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EU Charter)

The EU Charter, adopted in 2000, explicitly prohibits the death penalty (Article 2) and prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion, belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation (Article 21).

²⁰. Organization of American States, Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty, 1990, available at: <https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/mandate/Basics/american-convention-abolish-death-penalty.pdf>

²¹. Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, 2012, available at: <https://asean.org/asean-human-rights-declaration/>

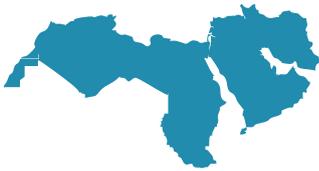
²². Organization of American States, Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty, 1990, available <https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/mandate/Basics/american-convention-abolish-death-penalty.pdf>

²³. Council of Europe, Protocol No. 13 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the abolition of the death penalty, 2002, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/-/council-of-europe-protocol-no-13-to-the-convention-for-the-protection-of-human-rights-and-fundamental-freedoms-concerning-the-abolition-of-the-death-1>

Istanbul Convention

The Istanbul Convention²⁴, an international legally binding treaty of the Council of Europe adopted in 2011, addresses violence against women as a form of discrimination, committing signatory States to the elimination of all forms of violence against women, and to legislative measures to protect women, including from domestic violence.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA)



Arab Charter on Human Rights

The Arab Charter on Human Rights, adopted in 2004 by the League of Arab States, aims to promote and protect human rights across Member States, while outlining civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. It prohibits discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status (Article 3) and sets limits on the application of the death penalty (Article 6)²⁵.

²⁴. Council of Europe, *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence ("Istanbul Convention")*, 2011, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/council-of-europe-convention-on-preventing-and-combating-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence>

²⁵. League of Arab States, *Arab Charter on Human Rights*, 2004, available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/551368?ln=fr&v=pdf>

Integrating the issue of gender discrimination into all abolitionist advocacy opportunities

Implementing gender-responsive abolitionist advocacy starts with integrating **the intersectional discrimination faced by women and LGBTQ+ people into all international abolitionist advocacy initiatives** (reports, oral statements, side events, etc.) including with the traditional targets of the abolitionist movement.



Reports
part 1



Oral statement
part 2



Side events
part 3

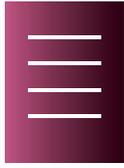
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS WITH WHICH THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT HAS TRADITIONALLY ENGAGED:

UN Charter-based Mechanisms:

- The Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review
- Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council:
 - Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or degrading Treatment or Punishment
 - Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions

UN Treaty-based Mechanisms:

- Committee Against Torture
- Human Right Committee



1. INTEGRATE GENDER ISSUES INTO ABOLITIONISTS REPORTS

FOR EACH REPORT ON THE DEATH PENALTY THAT YOU SUBMIT TO A HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISM, YOU SHOULD:

At the very least, disaggregate data by sex/gender²⁶. If you don't know whether women are on death row, you can consult the World Coalition's latest mapping report on women and death penalty and the database of the CCDPW. You can also implement a fact-findings mission to collect data (see chapter 3) or ask the targeted mechanism to request that the State provide the missing disaggregated data.

Wherever possible, also disaggregate data by age, age of any dependent children, nationality, ethnic group, disability, any history of gender-based violence (après disability), crime(s) of conviction, relationship to any co-defendant and relationship to any victim. You may want to specify that "relationship" can include familial relationships, marital or intimate partner relationships (including former relationships), as well as employment relationships (e.g., coworkers, employers, relatives of employers).

Add any credible information or examples you can find on gender bias in the use of the death penalty by describing the discrimination faced by women and LGBTQ+ people at all stages of the criminal justice process: Investigation (potential biases from law enforcement and communities), trial (obstacles to a fair trial, difficulty in accessing an effective defense, lack of training for defense lawyers on gender-related defense strategies and mitigating factors, absence of a thorough pre-trial investigation), sentencing (ignorance or minimization of gender-related mitigating factors, such as a history of gender-based violence, including a coercive control relationship with a co-defendant or a victim), etc.

Add targeted recommendations to address the discrimination and violence faced by women and LGBTQ+ people exposed to the death penalty (see sample recommendations below).

At the List of Issues (LOI) or List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPR) stages, ask the treaty body to pose questions related to women and LGBTQ+ people sentenced to death and/or recently executed. For example, if you don't have access to precise data on the number of women sentenced to death, you can ask the treaty body to request this information.

²⁶. At a global level, data on people on death row are mainly disaggregated by the sex. Recognition of gender identity is still very minimal in the carceral system. For example, transgender people are very often put in sections that correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth. Thus, in most of the cases, accessing disaggregating data by gender is challenging.

CASE STUDY

Using the Committee against Torture to obtain new data on women and the death penalty, the experience of TAHR and the World Coalition



Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights

In 2022, during the 75th Session of the Committee Against Torture's review of Ethiopia, the World Coalition and TAHR submitted a report at the List of Issues stage, highlighting the need for disaggregated data to address the lack of awareness regarding women on death row.

The Committee subsequently included this issue in its list of topics for discussion related to Ethiopia's second periodic report. In 2023, the Ethiopian government responded to the list of issues, stating that as of November 2022, there were 124 individuals on death row, comprising 122 men and 2 women, all convicted of homicide or aggravated homicide.

EXAMPLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON GENDER AND DEATH PENALTY TO INSERT IN REPORTS RELATED TO THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY:

- Eliminate the death penalty for offenses that do not meet the threshold of the “most serious crimes” under international law standards, particularly for non-violent offenses such as drug offenses, blasphemy, and “crimes against morality” such as adultery or consensual same-sex sexual conduct.
- Ensure that sentencing authorities take into full account any mitigating factors related to the backgrounds of women and LGBTQ+ people, including evidence of trauma, economic disparities, child marriage, gender-based violence including domestic violence, as well as psycho-social and intellectual disabilities.
- Promote mandatory training on gender-based discrimination and violence, pathways to crime, and gender-specific mitigating factors within the judiciary and law enforcement.
- Guarantee that women who are foreign nationals have access to consular assistance when they are charged with death-eligible offenses, as required by the Vienna Convention on Consular Relation.
- Provide civil society organizations, including independent NGOs, and outside observers, with unfettered access to detention facilities, to document detention conditions and the treatment of women and LGBTQ+ people under death sentences. Permit organizations to publish collected data.



EXPLORE MORE RECOMMENDATIONS concerning women and LGBTQ+ people that you can incorporate into your reports using the World Coalition's guide: *How to insert gender issues into abolitionist advocacy?*

Checklist of gender-related information to include in your reports on the death penalty:

1. Information on crimes that carry the death penalty, including crimes that disproportionately affect women and LGBTQ+ people:

- If the country provides for the death penalty for murder, check whether gender-based defences and mitigating circumstances can be recognized or are codified (for example, self defense for a murder committed in the context of a history of gender-based violence including domestic violence, even when the offender was not at imminent risk of serious harm at the time of the murder).
- Any mention of the death penalty for offenses against morality (e.g. sexual relations outside marriage, consensual sexual activities between people of the same sex).
- Any mention of the death penalty for consensual sexual conduct between persons of the same sex.
- Any mention of the use of the death penalty to target LGBTQ+ people.

2. If you know of any women on death row, make sure you include:

- The number of women known to be under death sentence. If possible, disaggregate this information by nationality, ethnic and/or racial group, known disability (if any), history of gender-based violence, age of any dependent children, presence of a male co-defendant (if any), familial or employment relationship to any victim, whether the woman was a victim of early or forced marriage, and the crime(s) of conviction.
- The number of women executed (if any) during the reporting period.
- The main crimes for which women have been sentenced to death and any evidence of gender bias in judicial proceedings leading to the death penalty.
- Specific recent case studies of women sentenced to death that may illustrate the gender discrimination they have encountered in the criminal justice system that resulted in the death penalty.
- Detention conditions and any non-compliance with Bangkok rules.

3. If there are no women under sentence of death but there have been in the past, make sure you add:

- Most recent date a woman was under a sentence of death or executed.
- The crimes for which women were sentenced to death and any evidence of gender discrimination they encountered in the judicial process leading to the death penalty.

4. If the country provides the death penalty for consensual sexual conduct between persons of the same sex, make sure you add:

- International human rights standards that such laws violate.
- Any information on arrests, threats of arrest, prosecutions or convictions because of actual or presumed sexual orientation.

5. If you are aware of transgender people on death row, make sure you add information:

- Conditions of detention (e.g. detention in isolation, detention in a prison that corresponds to the sex assigned at birth and not to gender identity, access to gender affirming care etc.).
- Any gender discrimination encountered in criminal justice system leading to the death penalty.

6. In general, include any information you have about discrimination that LGBTQ+ people experience in the criminal legal system placing them at risk of the death penalty and on death row.

7. Specific recommendations or questions related to women and or LGBTQ+ people facing the death penalty.



2. INTEGRATE GENDER ISSUES INTO ABOLITIONIST ORAL STATEMENTS

FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE ORAL STATEMENTS ON THE DEATH PENALTY, YOU MUST:

Disaggregate data on persons sentenced to death or executed by gender. If you do not have access to this disaggregated data, mention the lack of transparency regarding access to data, particularly with regard to women and LGBTQ+ people.

Present concisely the discrimination to which women and LGBTQ+ people are exposed in the context of the death penalty.

If your oral statement concerns a country that maintains the death penalty for consensual same-sex sexual conducts, **mention the discriminatory practice** that does not comply with international law.



3. INTEGRATE GENDER ISSUES IN ABOLITIONIST SIDE EVENTS

FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE DEATH PENALTY SIDE EVENTS

Ensure that any information on gender bias at work in the criminal justice system is highlighted (if the countries involved in the side event have women on death row).

Providing information on the number of women sentenced to death and/or recently executed, giving details of their profile, the crimes for which they were convicted and the existence of gender bias in their experiences with the criminal justice system.

Present specific case studies of women and/or LGBTQ+ people who have been exposed to the death penalty and experienced intersectional discrimination.

Where possible, **invite people with direct experience** of the death penalty to share their stories.

27. When it comes to inviting people directly affected by these experiences, the following minimum standards should be met: inform them well in advance of the content and purpose of the meeting; discuss boundaries to ensure they feel comfortable with what they choose to share; and offer appropriate support before and after the meeting to address any emotional or psychological needs. Participation in such activities can be emotionally taxing, so it's crucial to reduce any risk of retraumatization.

— **Invite interested stakeholders**, including women’s rights and LGBTQIA+ organizations active in the countries covered by the side event. These invitations can help you build partnerships.

Tip: If you haven’t planned to address these issues at the side event, make sure someone from the audience asks a question about them.

If relevant for your advocacy strategy, you can also organize side events that specifically address gender and intersectional discrimination at work in capital punishment.

If your organization is organizing a parallel event, don’t hesitate to notify the World Coalition Secretariat, which will be able to share your event with its network. You can write us to contactus@worldcoalition.org.



TO HELP YOU
add information about gender bias in capital punishment, check to see whether these reports include any information about your country:

Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Judged for More than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty*, September 2018, available at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.

Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *“No One Believed Me”: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses*, September 2021, available at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/No-One-Believed-Me-A-Global-Overview-of-Women-Facing-the-Death-Penalty-for-Drug-Offenses.pdf>.

Eleos Justice and Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Silently Silenced: State-Sanctioned Killing of Women*, March 2023, available at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Silently-Silenced-final-30-March-2023-2.pdf>.

World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, Penal Reform International, Prison conditions for women facing the death penalty: A factsheet, October 2018, available at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Prison-conditions-for-women-facing-death-penalty.pdf>.

World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, *Data Mapping: Women on Death Row*, August 2023, available at: <https://worldcoalition.org/document/data-mapping-women-on-death-row/>

Integrating death penalty issues into international mechanisms for the protection of women's rights and the rights of sexual and gender minorities

The implementation of gender responsive abolitionist advocacy also includes engaging with human rights mechanisms specializing in the rights of women and gender and sexual minorities, to highlight and combat the specific discrimination and violence faced by women and LGBTQ+ people in conflict with the law who may be at risk of being sentenced to death or executed.

1. WORK WITH THE CEDAW COMMITTEE

(Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)

WHAT IS THE CEDAW COMMITTEE?

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is the body of independent experts that monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The CEDAW Committee directly engages with States that have ratified CEDAW, raising awareness about their commitments, and encouraging them to adopt laws and implement public policies addressing discrimination against women. The Committee meets for three sessions each year, usually in February, June, and October.

CEDAW COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The Committee is made up of 23 members from around the world who are experts in women's rights and discrimination against women, and who are responsible for monitoring the progress made by States in implementing the CEDAW. These members serve as **independent experts** in their personal capacities, rather than as delegates or representatives of their countries. States that are parties to CEDAW elect the experts to serve four-year terms.



An important part of the CEDAW Committee's role is the "periodic reporting process," in which the Committee reviews a country's compliance with CEDAW and makes recommendations for improvements. The CEDAW Committee typically reviews 7-8 countries in each session. For each country, Committee members typically divide the task of analyzing compliance with CEDAW. A "country task force" is formed, comprising an expert designated as "country rapporteur" and other experts, each specifically tasked with reviewing a particular article of CEDAW in relation to the state party's compliance with its obligations.

The "country rapporteur" prepares a draft of the Committee's concluding observations.

Knowing which expert is assigned to analyze issues related to the death penalty can facilitate advocacy throughout the session. Depending on the country, issues relating to the death penalty can be analyzed under various headings (see section below). The CEDAW Committee Secretariat may be willing to provide this information at the beginning of the session (you can contact the Secretariat by email ohchr-cedaw@un.org).

You may also be able to gather this information during the informal lunch briefing in Geneva the day before the Committee begins its constructive dialogue with your country's government.

KEY ISSUES RELATED TO THE DEATH PENALTY THAT CAN BE ADDRESSED THROUGH THE CEDAW COMMITTEE

The CEDAW Committee has repeatedly highlighted that the death penalty is "a CEDAW issue." CEDAW Committee has pointed out in various lists of issues and concluding observations the need for countries that have ratified CEDAW to take steps to eliminate the discrimination faced by women in the judicial process leading to the death penalty, pending the total abolition of the death penalty. The CEDAW Committee's understanding of this issue opens the door for abolitionist activists and coalitions, in countries that have ratified CEDAW, to include in their reports the compounded discrimination that impacts the fundamental human rights of women, including especially lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer women, facing the death penalty.

CEDAW specifically addresses several issues relevant to the discrimination faced by women exposed to the death penalty.



Discrimination

Article 1 of CEDAW defines discrimination against women as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field²⁸.”



Access to justice

CEDAW GR No. 33²⁹ addresses women’s access to justice. It calls for effective legal remedies, gender-sensitive training for legal professionals, and support services for victims of violence. The recommendation also emphasizes the need for monitoring mechanisms to evaluate justice system effectiveness and recognizes that women experience discrimination in diverse ways, urging tailored responses.



Violence against women

CEDAW GR No. 19 and No. 35 recognize violence against women as a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights, obliging States to prevent and address all forms of gender-based violence. This provision is relevant to abolitionist advocacy because many women sentenced to death experienced multiple forms of violence, including sexual and psychological abuse and they may experience multiple forms of violence in detention.



Right to health

Article 12 of CEDAW deals with the right to health, and calls on states to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to guarantee equal access to health services. This provision is relevant to abolitionist advocacy, as prison authorities often deny women on death row access to their specific needs, including sexual and reproductive health, medical and mental health care, protection from gender-based and sexual violence, gender-affirming care, and substance abuse harm reduction services.



Disadvantaged women’s groups

CEDAW RG No. 28 and No. 25³⁰ emphasizes the need for specific protections and supports for disadvantaged groups of women, recognizing that certain groups face intersecting forms of discrimination that exacerbate

²⁸. United Nations, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, art. 1, adopted Dec. 18, 1979, 1249 U.N.T.S. 13, accessible at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

²⁹. United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *General Recommendation No. 33 on women’s access to justice*, CEDAW/C/GC/33, 2015, accessible at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n15/241/90/pdf/n1524190.pdf>

³⁰. United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *General Recommendation No. 28 on the Core Obligations of States Parties under Article 2 of the Convention*, CEDAW/C/GC/28 (2010), accessible at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g10/472/60/pdf/g1047260.pdf> and United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *General Recommendation No. 25 on temporary special measures*, CEDAW/C/GC/25 (2004), accessible at: [https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/General%20recommendation%2025%20\(English\).pdf](https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/General%20recommendation%2025%20(English).pdf)

their vulnerability. These recommendations are relevant for abolitionist advocacy as the analysis of the profiles of women sentenced to death reveals that a large majority of them are exposed to intersectional discrimination based on gender, race or ethnicity, disability, nationality and socio-economic background, among others.

Opportunities for the participation of civil society

One of the CEDAW Committee's main roles is to undertake a periodic reporting process with States that are parties to CEDAW. As part of this process, the State Party submits a report, the Committee reviews the report and conducts a "constructive dialogue" with a government delegation, and then the Committee issues concluding observations and recommendations to inform the State Party's work during the next reporting period. Civil society can play an active role at many stages during the reporting process.

Taking part in the CEDAW session (submission of reports and oral statements)

The reporting process allows a State Party to assess its achievements and identify additional steps necessary to advance human rights within its country. This process gives civil society the opportunity to participate in addressing human rights issues during the CEDAW Committee's review of the State Party.

STEP 1 → States Parties submit reports

In the initial stage of the reporting process, countries must submit a report assessing their legal framework for protecting and promoting human rights and their progress in implementing the CEDAW Committee's recommendations from the previous review (if any). This report must include specific information such as data, statistics, and recent laws pertaining to State Party obligations under CEDAW.

Opportunities for civil society before the State Party submits its report:

- Participate in consultations with the State Party as it prepares its report, pressing authorities to raise the issue of discrimination and violence faced by women exposed to the death penalty.
- Raise public awareness about CEDAW and the reporting process.
- Lobby the State Party to meet reporting deadlines and to include information on women facing the death penalty.

STEP 2 → CEDAW Committee meet during the Pre Session-Working Group to adopt List Of Issues (LOI)

The second phase of the reporting procedure involves the CEDAW Committee compiling a "List of Issues and Questions" for the State Party to guide preparation for the constructive dialogue. The LOI seeks additional information, supplementing the State Party report³¹.



Before the Pre-Session Working Group meets:

Opportunities for civil society during the CEDAW Committee's LOI stage:

- Prepare a List of Issues report or a List of Issues Prior to Reporting report identifying key concerns related to discrimination and violence faced by women exposed to the death penalty.
- Write to the CEDAW Committee Secretariat to express interest in participating civil society consultations with Committee experts during the Pre-Session Working Group (if permitted).



During the Pre-Session Working Group:

- Attend the Pre-Session Working Group and make an oral intervention to highlight intersectional discrimination and violence faced by women in the judicial process leading to the death penalty and on death row³².



After the Pre-Session Working Group:

- Civil society can closely monitor the List of Issues to see whether the issues raised in the report your organization sent before the pre-session have been taken up by the CEDAW experts.

STEP 3 →
State Party may submit written replies to List of Issues

State Parties are required to provide responses to the List of Issues prior to the session when the CEDAW Committee will consider the State report. This procedure encourages States to use the LOI as a guide to fulfil their reporting duties.

Opportunities for civil society:

- Scrutinize the State's written response to the LOI/LOIPR, as that response can provide crucial information about women facing the death penalty, especially if the LOI includes questions related to death penalty issues. In some cases, the response ignores questions pertaining to the death penalty or provide incomplete or inaccurate information in response to the CEDAW Committee's queries.
- Submit a second report to ensure that the CEDAW Committee has a complete picture of the situation pertaining to the requested information and the State Party's reply (see next step).

STEP 4 →
The CEDAW Session

During this phase, the CEDAW Committee invites the States parties under review to present their reports and answer the Committee's questions, in what is known as "constructive dialogue".

³¹. United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW/C/GC/28 (2010), available at: <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/cedaw/2010/en/77255>

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation No. 25 on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on temporary special measures, CEDAW/C/GC/25 (2004), available at: <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/cedaw/2004/en/87588>

³². In some circumstances, civil society organizations that submit a report at the LOI stage but that cannot travel to Geneva are able to deliver videorecorded oral statements.



Before the session:

Opportunities for civil society:

- Research, write, and submit a shadow report (also called a parallel report or an alternative report) on issues related to women facing the death penalty, including by responding to any relevant questions in the LOI/LOIPR and analyzing the State Party’s written reply.



During the session:

- Make an oral intervention on gender bias at work in capital punishment during the NGO formal and informal briefings with the CEDAW Committee.

- Participate in closed-door lunchtime briefings with Committee experts to help them prepare for the constructive dialogue.

- Distribute “one-pagers” to CEDAW experts, in person or by email, highlighting the main concerns raised in the alternative report.

- Participate in the session and provide the CEDAW Committee experts, through their secretariat or in person during the constructive dialogue breaks, with any additional information relating to the information provided by the State party. Such information could include, for example, details or case studies that might challenge the State party’s assertions.

Following the CEDAW session, the Committee issues its concluding observations and recommendations to the relevant State Party. This document serves as guidelines for the State’s implementation of human rights its obligations under CEDAW, highlighting both positive aspects and areas needing improvement, with corresponding recommendations. The Committee publishes its Concluding observations online, allowing civil society - particularly CSO - to use them for press conferences, public awareness-raising, domestic advocacy, monitoring implementation, and preparation for the next periodic review.

STEP 5 →
The CEDAW Session

Opportunities for civil society:

- Conduct awareness-raising activities on the recommendations.

- Lobby for legislation and other reforms to implement the CEDAW Committee’s recommendations and engage in consultation with the government to participate in the implementation of recommendations.

- Monitor and document the implementation of the recommendations³³.

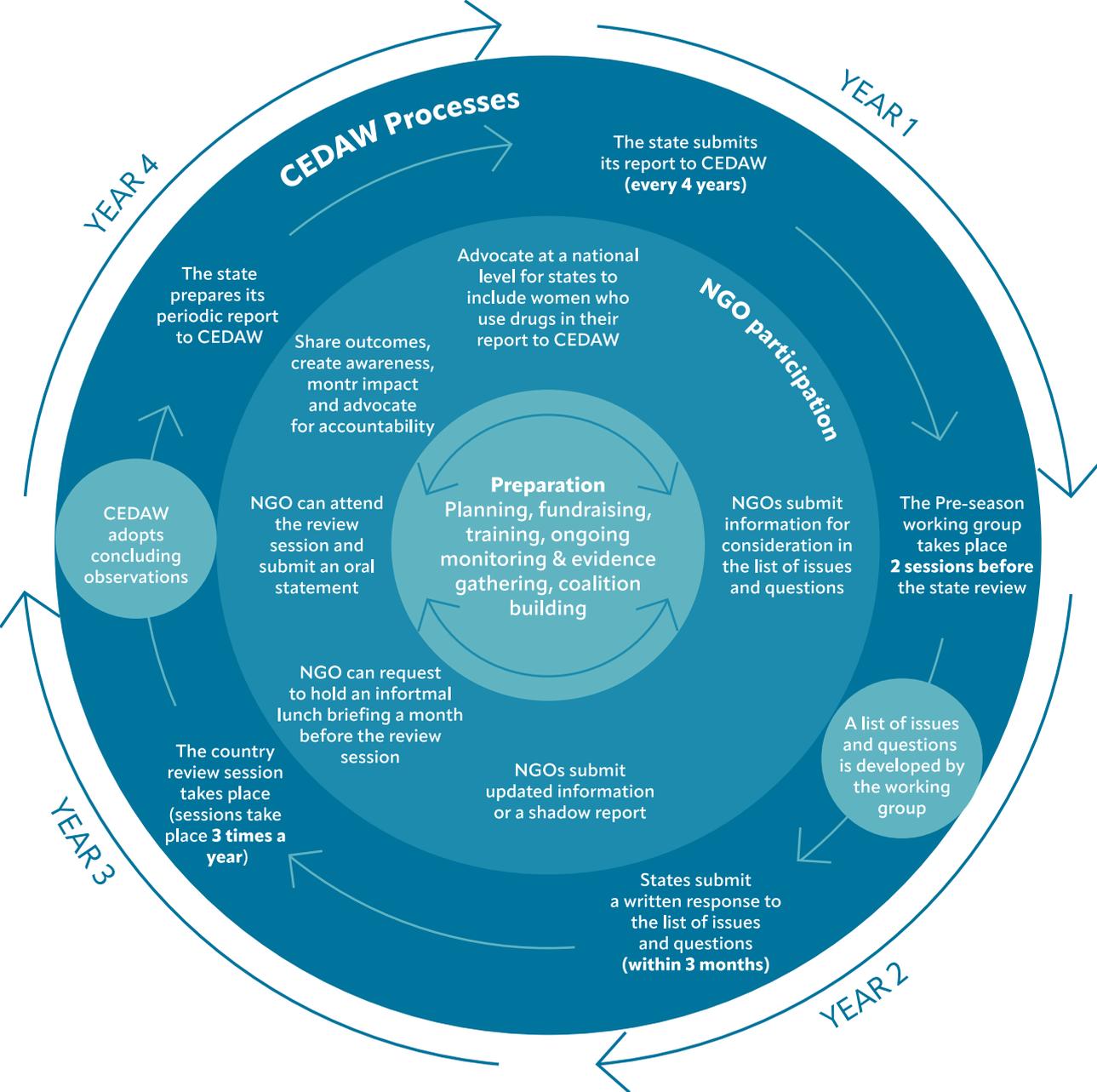
- Submit interim shadow report assessing implementation of priority recommendations.

- Inform the CEDAW Committee’s rapporteur on reprisals immediately if the State Party engages in reprisals for participation in the review process. For this, you can contact the CEDAW Secretariat (ohchr-cedaw@un.org).

³³. At the end of the Concluding Observations document, the CEDAW Committee identifies 2-4 recommendations for priority follow-up and provides a deadline for the State Party to report on implementation, typically within two years.

Graphic illustrating of the stages of the CEDAW reporting process.

Extracted from International Network of People who Use Drugs, *Technical Brief: A Guide for women who use drugs on engaging with the Convention on the Elimination of All form of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*



Organizing a CEDAW closed-door briefing

If you would like to raise the awareness among CEDAW Committee's experts on a specific subject, you can organize a closed-door briefing. Such briefings can be particularly useful in drawing attention to hidden forms of a discrimination, such as the many forms of discrimination faced by women and LGBTQ+ people exposed to the death penalty.

Steps to follow to organize a CEDAW closed-door side event/briefing:

1. Define the content of your event

- Define the subject of your side event and identify potential speakers by involving all relevant stakeholders who might be interested in collaborating.
- Don't forget to involve people with life experience of the death penalty on the preparation of the side event and during the event³⁴.

2. Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) and share them with the CEDAW Secretariat

- ToR should contain:
 - the purpose of the side event.
 - the estimated time.
 - the potential speakers.
- Contact the CEDAW Secretariat (ohchr-cedaw@un.org) at least 6 months before the session to propose the side event by submitting your ToR.

3. Finalise and confirm the list of speakers and start planning the schedule:

- Once the CEDAW Secretariat accept the side event, identify a moderator who will be in charge of asking the panellists questions and ensuring fair allocation of time.
- Prepare an outline of the side event, highlighting the moderator's questions, the people responsible for answering them, as well as the estimated time for each segment. This outline will make it easier to set up the side event and enable the panellists to prepare their responses.

4. Invite UN representatives who might be interested in the side event.

You could, for example, invite the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls or the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls. To extend this invitation, you can contact their Secretariat staff by email.

³⁴. As a reminder, when involving women with lived experience, the following minimum standards should be respected: provide adequate notice of the meeting's content and purpose; discuss boundaries to ensure they feel comfortable with the information they choose to share; and offer appropriate pre- and post-event support to address any emotional or psychological needs. Participation in such activities can be emotionally challenging, so it is crucial to minimize any risk of re-traumatization.



THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTION WATCH (IWRAP) ASIA PACIFIC

IWRAP Asia Pacific is an NGO which supports the CEDAW Committee and OHCHR in facilitating participation of women's groups/NGOs in the CEDAW Committee's review process. You can contact them if you have any questions on civil society participation and you can visit their website, which features the latest session news. In general, [we recommend that you always copy IWRAP Asia Pacific on your emails to the CEDAW Committee Secretariat.](#)

Website : <https://cedaw.iwraw-ap.org/>

Email : iwraw-ap@iwraw-ap.org

CASE STUDY

The World Coalition organizes a CEDAW closed-door side event to raise gender and death penalty issues

On 23 October 2023, the World Coalition organized a closed-door side event on a gender-based and intersectional approach to abolition of the death penalty as part of the CEDAW Committee's 86th session.

The discussion focused on the various forms of gender discrimination surrounding capital punishment. The Committee heard interventions and recommendations from Amy Bergquist (The Advocates for Human Rights), Chelsea Halstead (Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide), Chow Ying Ngeow (Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network, ADPAN), and exonerated persons Sunny Jacobs, (Sunny Center Foundation) and Sabrina-Butler Smith (Witness to Innocence).

This event was unprecedented as it allowed advocates to directly engage on the death penalty with CEDAW Committee experts outside the Committee's formal sessions. It enabled the abolitionist delegation to highlight the gender bias at work in capital punishment and to continue building fruitful relationships with the CEDAW Committee experts.

CEDAW Committee experts described the event as "enlightening" and an "eye-opener" and urged activists to continue engaging with the Committee, including by organizing briefings, regularly submitting reports with hard evidence and directly reaching out individually to CEDAW Committee experts.



The mobilization of abolitionist civil society with the CEDAW Committee is a recent development. Since 2022, as part of the World Coalition's Gender and the Death Penalty Project, and with support from TAHR and others World Coalition member organizations, the World Coalition has systematically submitted reports to the CEDAW Committee when it reviews States Parties that have women on death row.

Thanks to this work, CEDAW Committee experts have frequently raised the gender bias in capital punishment and have called for the abolition of the death penalty, highlighting the importance of abolitionist civil society engaging with their mechanism. From March 2022 to October 2024, the CEDAW Committee included issues related to the death penalty in the concluding observations for the reviews of Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mauritania, Niger, Tunisia, Oman, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia and Singapore, as well as in the lists of issues³⁵ for the reviews of Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Malawi, Oman, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Access to new information



The CEDAW Committee experts' references to the death penalty have facilitated access to information on women facing the death penalty and have helped fill gaps in existing data on women sentenced to death. In particular, [the list of issues stage is a strategic moment to collect new information](#).

Feed national and regional advocacy



The CEDAW Committee experts' references to the death penalty can help feed your national and regional advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty. Indeed, when CEDAW Committee experts adopt or borrow recommendations that CSOs include in their reports, those recommendations become official UN recommendations addressed to the State. In this way the CEDAW Committee can amplify the voices of CSOs and enable CSOs to use these official recommendations in their national advocacy, thereby strengthening and reinforcing the CSO's position, which creates a virtuous advocacy circle.

³⁵. Engagement at the LOI/LOIPR stage is vital, as it increases the likelihood that the CEDAW Committee will include death penalty issues on the "agenda" for the constructive dialogue. In the World Coalition's experience, waiting to engage with the CEDAW Committee until after the LOI/LOIPR appears may be too late to influence the review process.

CASE STUDY

The World Coalition and Singaporean civil society use the CEDAW Committee to obtain new data on women and the death penalty

In 2022, a coalition of abolitionist civil society (ADPAN, CPJP, TAHR, TJC, and WCADP) submitted a report to the LOI stage for Singapore's review. World Coalition organizations submitted various LOI items, including requests for demographic data on women sentenced to death, disaggregated by age, ethnicity, nationality, age of dependent children, as well as the crimes for which they have been convicted.

Following this submission, the CEDAW Committee's experts included death penalty issues in the List of issues and prior questions by asking the government for "information on the cases of women currently sentenced to death in the State party and whether and how gender-related vulnerabilities, such as trauma, gender-based violence against women, coercion and dependency, have been taken into consideration in their cases and whether such mitigating circumstances can be taken into account".

In response, the Singapore government replied that between 2017 and 2022, two women had been sentenced to death for drug-related offenses, claiming that "gender vulnerabilities" were not relevant in these cases.

Faced with this response, omitting important facts related to this case, the World Coalition organizations submitted an alternative report providing additional data to illustrate the shortcomings in Singapore's response, including the execution of one of the women in 2023. The information submitted by civil society was crucial, as it corrected incomplete government responses and highlighted systemic gender issues in the application of the death penalty in Singapore. This example demonstrates the importance of civil society contributions in exposing gaps and inaccuracies in official responses and influencing the line of questioning of the CEDAW Committee's experts.

United Nations	CEDAW/C/SGP/RQ/6
	Distr.: General 15 February 2024
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	Original: English English, French and Spanish only
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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Eighty-eighth session Geneva, 13–31 May 2024 Item 4 of the provisional agenda Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	
Replies of Singapore to the list of issues and questions in relation to its sixth periodic report**	

2. WORK WITH UN SPECIAL PROCEDURES

for the Protection of the Rights of Women and Sexual and Gender Minorities

*SPECIAL PROCEDURES
HAVE SEVERAL IMPORTANT
FUNCTIONS*

Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council are independent human rights experts or groups of experts established and renewed by resolutions of the UN Human Rights Council to address either specific country situations or thematic issues.

The Special Procedures have 4 working methods:



Communications



Country visit



Reporting



Other type of engagement



Communications

Special Procedures experts communicate directly with governments through letters to raise human rights concerns. The letters might address:

- Past human rights violations – this is known as “letter of allegation”.
- Ongoing or potential human rights violation – this is known as an “urgent appeal”.
- Concerns over laws or policies that do not comply with international standards.

As part of your work on women and LGBTQ+ people facing the death penalty, you may, for example, submit a communication concerning the particular case of a woman sentenced to death, a group of women sentenced to death facing specific violations of their rights, or particular legislation that threatens or discriminates against women or LGBTQ+ people in the context of the death penalty.

CSO can benefit from using the communications procedure in several ways:

- The communication can put authorities on notice that UN experts are concerned about a particular case, issue, or law. In some cases, authorities may act more cautiously when they are aware of UN scrutiny.
- Authorities may provide a written response to the communication. This written response can provide valuable information about how the State

describes what is happening or has happened to your client or victim.

- The communication may prompt authorities to stop the problematic behaviour or to amend or abandon the relevant law or policy.
- CSO can publicize the communication to garner domestic and international support.
- Multiple communications can demonstrate patterns of human rights violations that may prompt special procedures to examine an issue in even greater detail.

CASE STUDY

Engagement with UN Special Procedures in cases of women sentenced to death

Lisa Montgomery's life was marked by severe trauma and psychosocial disorders, exacerbated by a history of abuse and neglect. Despite her mental health challenges, she was sentenced to death in 2008 for a crime committed during a psychotic episode. Her trial was marred with gender discrimination, non-consideration of mitigating factors and ineffective legal representation. To address the urgency of her situation a joint communication to the Government of the USA was issued, based on information submitted by civil society, by 6 human rights experts including the Special Procedure on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls (Ref UA USA 28/2020). Despite national and international pressure, on January 13, 2021, Ms. Montgomery was executed by the United States federal government.

The Special Procedures have issued further communications in landmark cases relating to gender discrimination. In 2018 for example, a joint communication was made by 5 Special Procedures including the SR on violence against women and the Working Group on

the discrimination against women and girls, on a woman sentenced to death for killing her husband after a forced marriage in Sudan (Ref UA SDN 3/2018).

How to submit a communication for civil society?

1. Identify the purpose of the communication

2. In cases concerning individual victims, ensure that you have the express consent of the victim or, if the victim is not available, the express consent of their legal advisor, close relative or next of kin.

3. Draft the communication. This must meet the following criteria:

- It must not be manifestly unfounded or politically motivated.
- Provide a factual account of the alleged human rights violations.
- Be written in respectful language.
- Be based on credible and complete information and not solely on mass media reports.

4. Submit the communication via the online form: <https://spsubmission.ohchr.org/>. You can also send a copy by e-mail to the special procedure concerned.

Each expert's staff will assess whether to recommend that the special procedure take action based on the information provided, the scope of the special procedure's mandate, the mandate-holder's particular areas of interest, and the capacity of their office.

The expert's decision is also influenced by the criteria outlined in the Code of Conduct for the experts ("Code of conduct of the Special Procedures mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council," Human Rights Council resolution 5/2).

If you need support in submitting a communication, pro bono attorneys may be available to help!

If you are interested, you can contact mszwarcberg@worldcoalition.org and abergquist@advrights.org.

Country visit

To understand the human rights context of a specific country, a Special Procedure mandate-holder will go on a country mission and meet with relevant stakeholders such as government officials and human rights defenders. The mandate-holders may visit only after receiving an official invitation from the relevant authorities. **You can thus lobby your government to invite relevant Special Procedure to carry out a country visit.** Mandate-holders typically have funding and capacity to undertake only one or two visits per year.³⁶ If a mandate-holder plans a visit to your country, **you can submit written information before the mandate-holder arrives, help organize and participate in consultations during the visit and submit written follow-up information after the visit concludes.** The mandate-holder typically publishes a written report of findings and recommendations at the conclusion of the visit. This report can assist civil society organizations in their advocacy efforts.

Reporting

All Special Procedures submit an annual report of their work to the Human Rights Council. The report covers the work undertaken by the expert and examines emerging trends. In preparing thematic reports, mandate-holders typically announce a “call for inputs” from governments and civil society organizations about a series of questions or issues of concern. Input from civil society is particularly important for these reports. **Civil society organizations can submit contributions responding to calls for inputs that connect the mandate-holder’s issues of concern to gender discrimination in the context of the death penalty. These submissions can raise the visibility of intersectional issues pertaining to women and the death penalty.**

Mandate-holders typically publish the call for input on their sections of the UN website as well as on the Call for input webpage. Mandate-holders also publish their thematic reports on their sections of the UN website, and the reports also appear on the page for the relevant Human Rights Council session where the mandate-holder will present the report. This webpage lists all calls for input: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input-listing>

Other type of engagement

Mandate holders carry out other awareness-raising work, such as issuing press releases on a specific event or human rights violation. Mandate holders may issue joint or individual media statements and press releases, particularly following country visits and during the UN Human Rights Council or General Assembly.

Various Special Procedures **focusing on the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ people** can be relevant targets for your gender responsive abolitionist advocacy.

*SPECIAL PROCEDURES THAT
FOCUS ON THE RIGHT OF
WOMEN AND GENDER AND
SEXUAL MINORITIES WITH
WHICH TO ENGAGE ON
DEATH PENALTY ISSUES*

– **The Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls:** Established in 2010 by the Human Rights Council, this working group consists of five independent experts dedicated to intensifying efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls worldwide.

– **The Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, its causes and consequences:** The Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls’ mandate was created in March 1994 and aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and its causes and to remedy its consequences.

– **The Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:** The Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity was established in June 2016 and is mandated to explore ways to better pro-

³⁶ Some mandate-holders conduct additional « academic visits » to universities in countries they want to visit, where formal country visits are not possible either due to funding constraints or the absence of an official government invitation. These academic visits can also open the door to informal civil society engagement with the mandate-holder on issues of concern.

CASE STUDY

Abolitionist coalition submits a response to a Call for Input highlighting how the death penalty can stifle freedom of expression and association for LGBTQ+ people

In January 2024, the World Coalition with Hope Behind Bars Africa, 6rang, the CC-DPW, and TAHR, submitted a report to the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (IE SOGI), in response to a call for input. The report highlighted that the death penalty can be used as a tool to indirectly restrict the rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association of LGBTQ+ people based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. The report explained that in countries that authorize the death penalty for consensual same-sex sexual conduct, LGBTQ+ people can be sentenced

to death for crimes such as “corruption on earth” simply for speaking out in favor of their rights.

Thanks to this contribution, the Independent Expert drew attention in this report, to how authorities can use the death penalty as a tool of discrimination against LGBTQ+ communities, citing Uganda’s Anti-Homosexuality Act as an example.

tect persons who suffer from violence and discrimination on the basis of their presumed or real sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

As relevant, you can also engage with other Special Procedures whose mandate provides an opportunity to highlight cross-cutting issues relating to gender and the death penalty such as:

[Special Rapporteur on the right to health.](#)

[Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities.](#)

[Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers.](#)

3. WORK WITH THE CSW

(the UN Commission on the Status of Women)

WHAT IS THE CSW AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

The CSW is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) working on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It establishes global standards for gender equality, offers policy recommendations on women's rights, and monitors the implementation of Beijing Platform for Action³⁷. Each year, the CSW holds a session in March, resulting in agreed conclusions and resolutions on a priority theme.

While civil society cannot directly participate in negotiations (unless a UN Member State invites them to be member of the State delegation), they can influence the process by advocating with friendly government delegations to include their issues in the final text of "agreed conclusions and resolutions".

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

Civil society organizations have several opportunities for engagements in the CSW:

- [Submit written statements](#) if the organizations has consultative status.
- [Make oral statements during the general discussion.](#)
- [Make oral interventions during interactive panels.](#)
- Take part in official side events co-organized by the UN and governments.
- Be part of a State delegation to [take part in the negotiations of the "Agreed Conclusions."](#)

It's important to note that civil society organizations need to link all of their possible engagements to UN Member States, who take the lead in influencing the outcomes of negotiations.

³⁷ The Beijing Platform for Action is a comprehensive global agenda for advancing gender equality and empowering women, established at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Adopted by 189 countries, the platform identifies 12 critical areas where urgent action is needed to achieve gender equality and ensure women's rights across various sectors.



PARTICIPATE IN NGO CSW FORUM AND ORGANIZE PARALLEL EVENTS THAT COINCIDE WITH CSW:

In parallel of CSW, the NGO CSW Forum is organized by and for civil society organizations to connect them with the official United Nations Commission on the Status of Women process. It provides a platform for global civil society to present their work to UN agencies, member States and other CSOs³⁸.

This forum can be an opportunity to connect with other civil society organization to strengthen abolitionist allies and to promote recognition of the reality of women and LGBTQ+ people facing the death penalty in the fight for women's rights.

³⁸. NGO CSW Forum, The civil society gathering parallel to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW), accessible at: <https://ngocsw.org/ngocswforum/>

CASE STUDY

Women Beyond Walls and Penal Reform International hold a CSW68 side event raising awareness of women sentenced to death in the context of criminalization of poverty

At CSW68 in 2024, Women Beyond Walls, Penal Reform International and the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies collaborated to host a side event focusing on poverty as a catalyst for the criminalization of women. The Governments of Canada and the United States, as well as the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations afforded their support through co-sponsorship. This event underscored the interconnectedness of gender, poverty, and punitive legal systems, emphasizing the pressing need for reform, especially considering the rapidly growing female prison population worldwide. The event resonated with calls to dismantle laws that criminalize poverty, recognizing their disproportionate impact on women.



Work with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty and the elimination of gender biases in capital punishment

1. COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS (CND)

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), a functional commission of ECOSOC, serves as the primary policy-making body of the United Nations for drug control matters. It oversees the implementation of the international drug conventions and consists of 53 Member States elected by ECOSOC. All other member states, UN and regional agencies, as well as civil society, may attend as observers.

The CND is the principal policy-making body within the UN system on drug control issues and one of the governing bodies of the UNODC, responsible of approving their policies related to drugs. The CND acts through resolutions and decisions, and as a space for discussions on drug policy. The CND serves as a strategic platform to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty and to promote its reduced application with a gender perspective, recognizing that drug-related offenses are the second most common reason for which women are sentenced to death globally (To know more on the intersection between the death penalty for drug trafficking and gender discrimination, you can consult the manual of Chapter 1 *What do we mean when we talk about gender discrimination and capital punishment?*).

2. ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES

of gender-sensitive advocacy on drug policy and the death penalty

A DISCONNECTION BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL SYSTEMS AND HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEMS

The International Drug Conventions, particularly the 1988 Convention obliging States to criminalize illegal drug supply, triggered the imposition of disproportionate and excessive punishments including the death penalty for drug offenses. These penalties often impact women the most, especially those from marginalized backgrounds. The fact that the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR was developed in the same period as the third Convention demonstrates a missed opportunity where the international abolitionist community failed to push back on escalation of death sentencing for drug offenses.

Since the late 1980s, observers have noted that the international drug control and human rights systems have evolved to exist in parallel universes with insufficient attention paid to the negative and gendered consequences of punitive drug policies. As highlighted by Amnesty International during the 2023 CND thematic session on human rights, the CND has hitherto failed to condemn the use of the death penalty for drug offenses. In fact, no CND resolution has so far included any language related to the imposition of the death penalty for drug offences. The closest resolution to have touched on this topic was Resolution 59/7 relating to 'proportionate sentencing for drug-related offences', but the text failed to include any reference to capital punishment.³⁹

TOWARDS A STRATEGIC CHANGE

The breakdown of the "Vienna Consensus" at the 67th CND session in 2024⁴⁰ - with the first votes on resolutions since 1985 - marks a pivotal moment for the abolitionist movement, **opening new avenues to advocate for a formal CND stance against the death penalty for drug-related offenses. This shift also creates a strategic opportunity to highlight gender biases in capital punishment, especially those affecting women and LGBTQ+ people in drug-related cases.** The significance of this momentum is further underscored by the International Narcotics Control Board's (INCB) evolving stance on the death penalty. While previously hesitant to oppose capital punishment for drug offenses, the INCB began in 2014

³⁹. CND, Resolution 59/7. Promotion of proportionate sentencing for drug-related offences of an appropriate nature in implementing drug control policies, accessible at : https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/CND_Sessions/CND_59/Resolution_59_7.pdf

⁴⁰. At the 67th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the traditional «Vienna Consensus» on global drug policy faced unprecedented division. Led by Colombia, a coalition of over 60 countries pushed for reform, advocating for harm reduction and public health-based approaches rather than punitive measures at the high-level segment that preceded the regular session of the CND. At the CND itself, Member States voted on two CND resolutions for the first time in four decades. For an analysis, see: <https://idpc.net/publications/2024/08/the-vienna-spirit-shatters-report-of-the-67th-session-of-the-un-commission-on-narcotic-drugs-and>

to encourage retentionist countries to consider abolition. This evolution includes a gender-specific focus, as evidenced in its 2016 annual report⁴¹, which introduced a chapter on women and drugs — signalling an increased awareness of the gendered impacts of punitive drug policies.

It is important that the abolitionist movement and its allies continually confront the drug control system with the issue of the death penalty, until complete abolition is achieved. Irrespective of past resistance, the CND holds potential to be a useful forum to promote abolition. Highlighting the unique circumstances and intersectional discrimination faced by women and LGBTQ+ people in the context of the death penalty for drug-related offenses serves as a strategic entry point to enhance the abolitionist movement's effectiveness. This can be achieved by integrating a gender perspective into discussions surrounding the death penalty and by emphasizing the specific challenges encountered by women and LGBTQ+ people within broader conversations about gender-sensitive drug policies.

3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ABOLITIONIST CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society can engage with the CND through various channels, including resolution proposals, plenary sessions, and side events. Key opportunities arise during the main session in March, as well as thematic intersessional meetings held as a follow up for the implementation of the latest high-level political document on drugs: the 2019 Ministerial Declaration on drugs⁴². These intersessional meetings are generally held in October or November each year.

ENGAGING BEFORE THE MARCH SESSION:

Get involved with Member States to influence the resolutions:

Civil society can influence member states' resolutions by advocating for recognition of the discrimination faced by women and LGBTQ+ people facing the death penalty for drug-related offenses. It can put pressure on states to include references to gender and the death penalty in draft resolutions, by organizing pre-CND meetings with national delegations or those of other like-minded states, and by sending advocacy letters.

Submit a written statement to the CND:

These statements can focus on any aspect of the CND agenda, are 1,500 words long, and need to be submitted two weeks ahead of the CND session by an ECOSOC-accredited NGO to the Secretariat of the Governing Bodies (unodc-sgb[@]un.org). The statements are posted on the official web-page of the CND session.

⁴¹. International Narcotics Control Board, Thematic Chapter: Women and Drugs, Annual Report 2016, 2016, accessible at: https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR2016/English/AR2016_E_ThematicChapter-WomenAndDrugs.pdf

⁴². United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem, March 2019, accessible at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/2019/Ministerial_Declaration.pdf.

*ENGAGING DURING
THE MARCH SESSION:*

Make an oral statement highlighting the gender bias at work in capital punishment for drug related offenses. Any ECOSOC-accredited NGO can request to do an oral statement at the start of the relevant agenda item at the CND. These statements are 3-minute long.

— **Organize a side event** on gender bias at work in capital punishment for drug related offenses. The application period is typically in January. These events are 50-minutes long and a great opportunity to open the debate on the death penalty with UN agencies, Member States and civil society. The NGO Harm Reduction International has often organized events on the death penalty at the CND, so contact them for more information.

— **Organize bilateral meetings with Government delegates** to share with them your concerns about the disproportionate number of women sentenced to death for drug related offenses, and the need for the CND to take up issues relating to the abolition of the death penalty.

— **Participate in informal NGO dialogues:** Coordinated by Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC), these dialogues enable civil society to meet with high level United Nation Officials (heads of UNODC, INCB, CND and other UN agencies such as WHO, OHCHR, UNAIDS) to raise questions and have a dialogue with these high-level officials on drug control issues. Typically, you will be requested to submit your questions in advance to the VNGOC.

— **Share and disseminate publications and reports from your organization** on the NGO table outside the Plenary room of the CND, or the virtual NGO table coordinated by the VNGOC.

If your organisation wants to be involved with the CND, you can inform the World Coalition Secretariat (contactus@worldcoalition.org) which will coordinate synergies with the International Drug Policy Consortium.



To find out more about how civil society can get involved in CND, watch this IDPC video: **CND 101: A Guide to the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs**



THE INTERNATIONAL DRUG POLICY CONSORTIUM (IDPC)

IDPC is a global network of over 190 members from all over the world that works collectively to promote person-centred, rights-affirming drug policies at the national, regional and international levels. IDPC plays a coordinating role for international drug policy advocacy and guides civil society organizations prior to each annual session, helping them to analyze draft resolutions, coordinating thematic discussions, etc.

IDPC hold pre-CND webinars at the end of February each year, and an in-person orientation meeting the day before the CND, they coordinate tools like the CND Blog and the CND App, and they document and analyze the CND proceedings.

If you're thinking of developing an advocacy strategy around CND, you can contact IDPC (contact@idpc.net) and sign up for their newsletter (<https://idpc.net/newsroom/newsletter>).

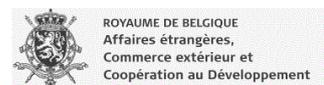
HARM REDUCTION INTERNATIONAL (HRI)

HRI is a leading NGO focused on promoting evidence-based policies and practices that reduce the negative health, social, and legal impacts of drug use and drug policy. In their work on the death penalty, HRI advocates for the abolition of capital punishment, particularly for drug-related offenses, highlighting the disproportionate and inhumane nature of such penalties. They conduct research, produce reports, and engage in advocacy to raise awareness and influence policy changes globally. HRI also regularly organizes side events on the death penalty at the CND.

Link of their website: <https://hri.global/>

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty is made up of over 180 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), bar associations, local authorities and trade unions. Its aim is to strengthen the international dimension against the death penalty. Its ultimate goal is universal abolition of capital punishment. The World Coalition brings a global dimension to the action taken by its members in the field, sometimes in isolation. It complements their initiatives, while respecting the independence of each.

The Advocates for Human Rights is a voluntary non-governmental organization which, since its creation in 1983, has been committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. TAHR conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact-finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publication. TAHR is committed to ensuring the protection of human rights for women worldwide. In 1991, TAHR made a formal commitment to oppose the death penalty worldwide, and set up a project on the death penalty. The Advocates currently sits on the Steering Committee of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty.





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