

WORLD DAY
AGAINST
**THE DEATH
PENALTY**

Stories for life



**WORLD
COALITION**
— AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY —
www.worldcoalition.org

10
OCTOBER
2026/2027

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AGAINST THE
DEATH PENALTY**

Every **10th October**, the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and abolitionist actors worldwide commemorate the **World Day Against the Death Penalty**, highlighting the progress achieved in the global campaign for the abolition of capital punishment. In 2026 and 2027, the World Day will highlight the **human lives affected by the death penalty** and amplify their stories.

The main objective of this World Day is to **raise public awareness** that the death penalty affects humans beings and entire communities whose voices should be heard.

To do so, the World Coalition and its member organizations have identified specific objectives:

1. **Support abolitionist activities** by sharing important tools for advocacy and mobilization.
2. **Share the stories** of persons sentenced to death, victims' families, law enforcement officials and other people affected by capital punishment.
3. **Work with civil society organizations** that amplify the voices of persons directly impacted.



Behind the Death Penalty, Real Stories

Public discourse often relies on distancing narratives that portray people sentenced to death as irredeemable or inhuman making the death penalty more socially acceptable. This campaign challenges that framing by affirming a simple but essential truth: **the death penalty is imposed on people, not on abstractions.**

Recalling the humanity of those sentenced does not deny the harm caused by violent offences, nor does it diminish the pain of victims and their families. Instead, it recognizes that the **death penalty impacts multiple lives simultaneously**, and may amount to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, given the severe psychological and physical suffering caused by prolonged death row incarceration.

The campaign invites members and partners to **speak of (and with) the people affected** by the death and highlight their lived experiences while acknowledging the structural, social, and individual factors that may have contributed to their conflict with the law, eg. poverty, discrimination, trauma, mental health issues, or experiences of gender-based violence, which disproportionately affect vulnerable populations.



Stories for Life



Central to this campaign is the recognition that **directly impacted people are not merely sources of testimony, but strategic actors** who shape advocacy priorities, messaging, and methods.

Storytelling is therefore a key advocacy tool because it reclaims narrative power from systems that have historically spoken about affected individuals without listening to them. By centering lived experiences, it exposes realities that are often absent from policy debates: life on death row, prolonged incarceration consequences, and the structural inequalities that shape capital punishment systems.



Ralph "Ron" Wright,
*former police officer and military,
death row survivor,
member of Witness to Innocence.*

“

I used to never be for or against capital punishment because it was not a major concern to me. Even as a police officer, I had no interest or concern for what happened to the people I arrested.

[Surviving death row] educated me. **There are so many things we don't know about this process.** Now that I see that **there are so many flaws that need to be corrected,** it has taught me that I need to be more proactive to help bring about some of these changes.

Death Penalty Overview

The global movement to abolish the death penalty continues to gain ground: 144 States are abolitionist in law or in practice. Yet 2025 saw a dramatic 78% increase in executions, reaching 2,707 recorded cases[1]. In several countries, people continue to be sentenced to death and executed, often with little regard for the profound and lasting harm inflicted on those on death row, their families, victims' families, lawyers, judges, and prison staff.



113

States **abolished** the death penalty for all crimes



9

States **abolished** the death penalty for **common law crimes**



23

States are **abolitionists in practice**



54

States are **retentionists**

25,508

people were on death row, of which around 5% women.

2,707

people executed (the highest number recorded globally since 1981).

2,334

people sentenced to death

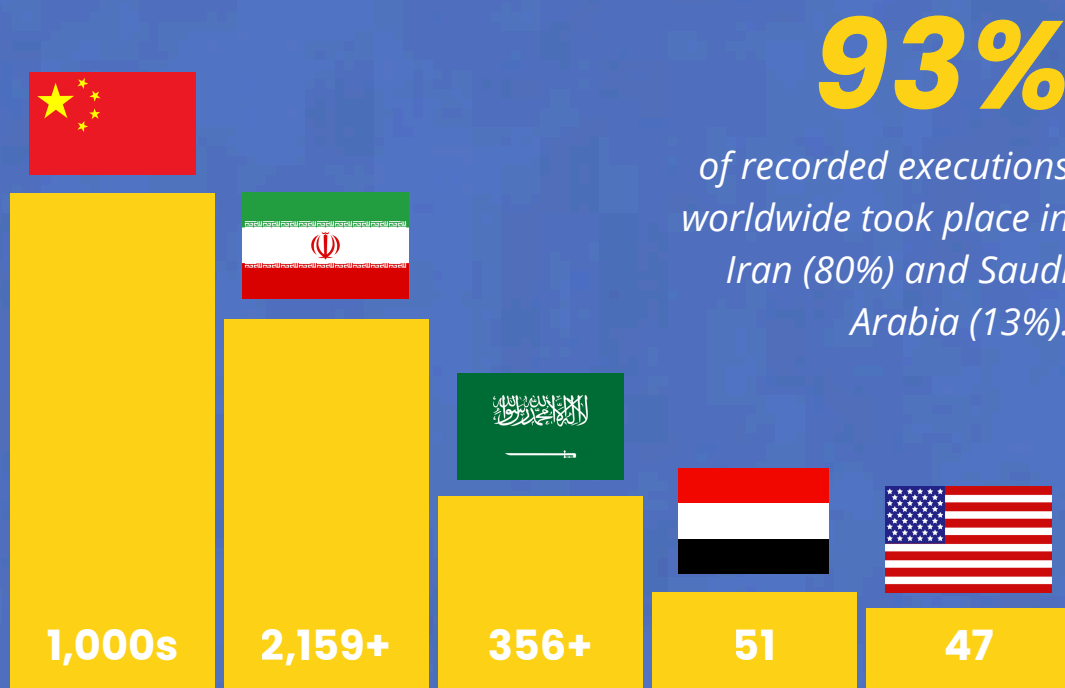


+78%

executions worldwide

[1] Amnesty International, Global Report, Death Sentences and Executions 2025, May 2026.

Situations of concern



93%

of recorded executions worldwide took place in Iran (80%) and Saudi Arabia (13%).



Nearly half of all known executions (46%) were for drug-related offences, recorded across five countries: China, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore.



Saudi Arabia reached a total of 2,000 executions from 2015, including minors, women, and 42% of foreign nationals[2].



Burkina Faso introduced a draft Bill to reinstate the death penalty for crimes of "high treason", "terrorism", and "espionage".



Israel adopted a Death Penalty for Terrorists Law which discriminatorily exposes Palestinians to the be brought before military courts and sentenced to death.



Maldives broadened capital punishment to include drug-related offences and signalled plans to draft legislation to enable executions, despite a moratorium in place since 1954.[3].

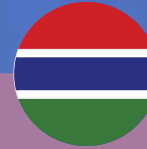
[2] ESOHR, Joint Statement : Saudi Arabia Surpasses 2,000 Executions Under King Salman, 20 April 2026.

[3] Human Rights Watch, "Maldives : Withdraw Proposed Death Penalty Bill", 16 April 2026.

Confirming the Abolitionist Trend



Viet Nam abolished the death penalty for drug transportation and 7 other crimes.



Gambia abolished the death penalty for murder and other offences.



Lebanon introduced a Bill to abolish the death penalty.



Nigeria introduced a Bill to abolish the death penalty.



The Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan deemed attempts to reintroduce the death penalty unconstitutional.



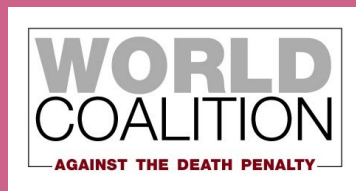
The Governor of Alabama, USA, Kay Ivey granted the first clemency to a Black person and second in the state since 1976.

[1] Amnesty International, Global Report, Death Sentences and Executions 2025, May 2026.

Find Out More

Find out everything about the World Day Against the Death Penalty at <https://worldcoalition.org/worldday>, including the World Day poster; the mobilization kit; the testimonies collection; and the last World Day report.

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty is an alliance of more than 170 NGOs, bar associations, local authorities and unions. The aim of the World Coalition is to strengthen the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Its ultimate objective is to obtain the universal abolition of the death penalty. The World Coalition gives a global dimension to the sometimes-isolated actions taken by its members on the ground. It complements their initiatives, while constantly respecting their independence.



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