



**reasons to abolish
the death penalty**

There is a universal trend towards the abolition of the death penalty as has already been recognised by the two-thirds of countries around the world that no longer apply it.

Since to oppose the death penalty is to maintain our humanity and dignity in the face of barbarism, since to refuse a State the right to kill those it is supposed to take care of is to preserve the basis of our freedom,

**here are 10 reasons
to fight against the death
penalty worldwide.**



For 20 years, the NGO ECPM has been campaigning for the abolition of the death penalty throughout the world.

For more information visit www.ecpm.org

**We support
abolition
because
the death
penalty is...**

contrary to human rights



The right to life is a fundamental right enshrined in several international human rights conventions.

“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 3

“Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his/her life”.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 6

“Each State Party shall take all appropriate measures to abolish the death penalty within its jurisdiction”.

Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (OP2), Article 1.

This is the only international treaty on the abolition of the death penalty which prohibits executions and provides for total abolition.

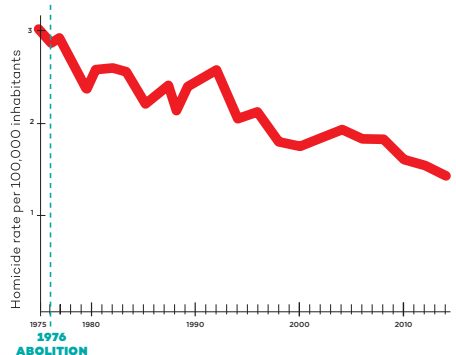
not a deterrent

It is ineffective in fighting crime and does not make society safer.

When a State considers that life has no value, it spreads this idea among its inhabitants, which does not contribute to making society safer. On the contrary, the death penalty has never been proven to act as a deterrent, and research has emphasised that violence leads to more violence: countries that use the death penalty have higher crime rates than abolitionist countries.

**AMONG THE 20 SAFEST
COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD*
ONLY 3 APPLY THE
DEATH PENALTY**

*according to the Global Peace Index 2019



**IN CANADA, THE HOMICIDE RATE
HAS DECREASED BY 44% SINCE ABOLITION**

revenge not justice



***"AN EYE FOR AN EYE LEAVES
THE WHOLE WORLD BLIND".***

Mahatma Gandhi

It perpetuates the cycle of violence and suffering, where justice aims instead to organise reparation of the situation in order to restore balance and peace in the community.

The use of the death penalty weakens the very concept of justice in countries that apply it. It responds to the law of retaliation, an ancestral law based on the reciprocity of crime and punishment symbolised by the expression, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth".

irreversible

Miscarriages of justice exist, so the death penalty can kill innocent people.

Lack of resources, capacity and independence of police forces and the judiciary are the main reasons for death sentences. The poor quality of legal representation is also a factor: in many countries, those facing the death penalty have a court-appointed lawyer who does not necessarily have the expertise to provide adequate representation.

“JUSTICE IS RENDERED BY FALLIBLE HUMANS. NOTHING WILL EVER PREVENT MISCARRIAGES OF JUSTICE”.

Robert Badinter, ECPM Honorary President



**USA:
167 DEATH ROW
PRISONERS HAVE
BEEN EXONERATED
SINCE 1973***

*According to the Death Penalty Information Center

INDEFINITE WAIT

**LEBANON: HALF OF DEATH ROW PRISONERS
SPEND 16 TO 25 YEARS IN DETENTION**

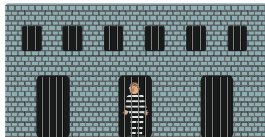
OVERCROWDING

**DRC: THE MAKALA PRISON
IS AT 560% CAPACITY**

SOLITARY

CONFINEMENT

**MALAYSIA: DEATH
ROW PRISONERS ARE
HELD IN THEIR CELLS
23 HOURS A DAY**



PHYSICAL TORTURE

**CAMEROON:
24 METHODS OF
TORTURE HAVE BEEN
DOCUMENTED AIMED
AT BREAKING DOWN
AND HUMILIATING
DETAINEES**

DISTANCE

**MAURITANIA: 85% OF DEATH ROW
PRISONERS ARE IMPRISONED
1000+ KM FROM THE CAPITAL
AND RECEIVE NO VISITS**

MENTAL TORTURE

**CHINA, IRAN, SAUDI ARABIA:
PUBLIC EXECUTIONS ARE A FORM OF TORTURE
ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

torture

Appalling detention conditions, psychological distress and execution methods: the death penalty is a cruel, inhuman and degrading form of punishment.

A punishment that denies all hope is in practice a form of torture. Death row prisoners live in constant fear of being killed, for twenty, thirty, forty years. This is known as death row syndrome. Besides, there is no humane way to kill a human being; whatever the technique used to kill, it always causes extreme suffering.

discriminatory

The death penalty is applied unequally.

Defendants from disadvantaged backgrounds face two problems: lack of financial means to defend themselves and lack of knowledge of the legal system necessary to understand what is at stake in their trial and how the justice system works.

It is also particularly used against stigmatised minorities: migrants, homosexuals, ethnic or religious groups, etc.

**AS OF 2020, HOMOSEXUALITY
CARRIES THE DEATH PENALTY
IN 12 COUNTRIES**

89%
HAVE NOT MET
THEIR LAWYER
BEFORE THEIR HEARING

20%
HAVE NEVER BEEN
TO SCHOOL

74%
ARE ECONOMICALLY
VULNERABLE

76% ARE FROM
RELIGIOUS MINORITIES
OR DISADVANTAGED
BACKGROUNDS



DEATH ROW PRISONERS IN INDIA

a tool of political repression



It is used as a tool of repression (against the population) and to exert pressure (between countries).

Many countries apply it as a means of political and/or religious repression: you do not demonstrate against government policy, when simply expressing your opinion is enough to send you to the scaffold. It is also frequently used as a tool to exert pressure between countries, with foreign death row prisoners the subject of negotiations and used as political bargaining chips.

**IRAN: 120 PEOPLE EXECUTED
FOR BELONGING TO BANNED POLITICAL
GROUPS, BETWEEN 2010 AND 2019**

traumatic

The death penalty creates new victims.

Not only do death sentences fail to provide relief to the relatives of victims of the original crime, but they also extend the suffering and trauma to the families of those sentenced to death, as well as to the jurors, lawyers, judges, etc. involved in the case.

“We should never ignore the post-traumatic stress caused by the responsibility of killing a human being and how difficult it is to digest one’s own physical involvement in the death of another”.

Aramis Ayala, Florida Chief Prosecutor

“Overnight, my son could not talk to his father anymore... All that anger, trauma and distance came out. He has had some pretty severe crises”.

Sabine Atlaoui, wife of French national Serge Atlaoui, sentenced to death in 2007



an obstacle to the truth



The death penalty is not supported by all families of victims and does not ensure reparation.

Many victims and/or their families call for truth, not death. Above all, they want to understand, to know and to see justice done. In terrorism cases, for example, many victims want sentences to be commuted to life imprisonment and for those convicted to be heard in order to further the fight against terrorism.

“Executing these Jihadists will not enable our societies and the victims of terrorism to understand the reasons for their departure and the ramifications of their organisation”.

Guillaume Denoix de Saint-Marc, Director of the Association française des victimes du terrorisme

incompatible with rehabilitation



The death penalty is a denial of the capacity for reintegration of each and every one.

A socially useful life remains possible for all prisoners. This is an important objective of justice, which should rehabilitate the perpetrators of offences and provide reparation in order to restore balance and peace in the community.

“I spent 18 years on death row. When I got out, I graduated in law and founded an association to defend the rights of prisoners in Africa”.

Pete Ouko, Kenyan, former death row prisoner.



Since 2000, ECPM has been fighting against capital punishment worldwide, bringing together and mobilising abolitionist forces across the globe. We conduct advocacy with international bodies, we educate, inform and raise awareness of citizens, we strengthen capacities of abolitionist actors and we act alongside them at the local level.

**FIND INFORMATION ON OUR CAMPAIGNS
AND ALL OUR PUBLICATIONS
AT WWW.ECPM.ORG.**

The examples cited in this document are taken from publications by ECPM and its partners: Fact-finding missions on death row (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malaysia, Mauritania, Lebanon, Indonesia, Cameroon), Reports of the 7th World Congress Against the Death Penalty (2019), Annual report on the death penalty in Iran 2019, 10 questions to better understand the situation of the French citizens sentenced to death in Iraq (2019).



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Each year several thousand people are sentenced to death and executed throughout the world. China alone executes more prisoners than all the other countries combined, although official data is classified as a state secret.



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ensemble contre
la peine de mort
together against
the death penalty