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BERLIN, GERMANY

8th WORLD CONGRESS AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

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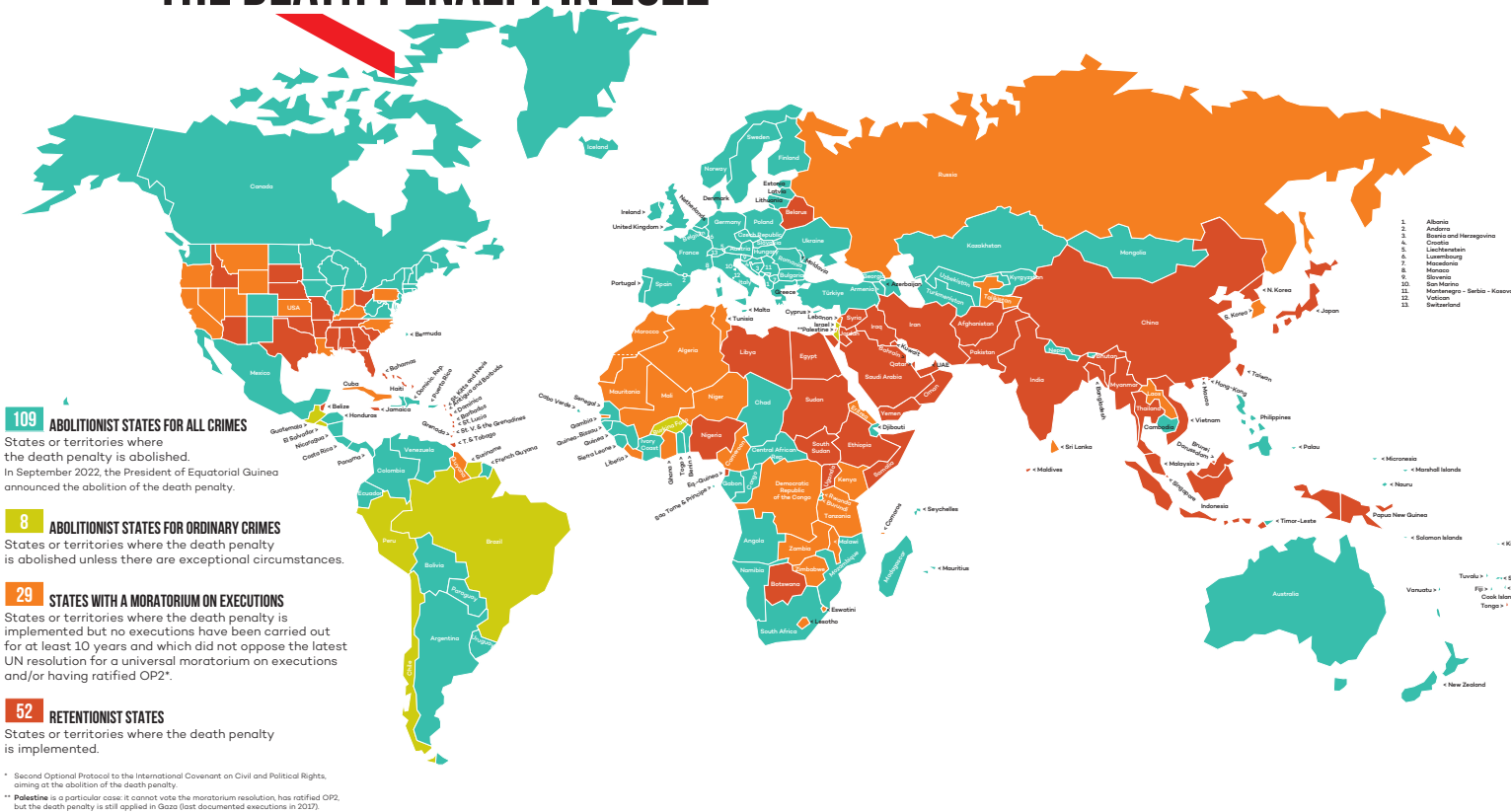
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THE DEATH PENALTY IN 2022



KEY FACTS & FIGURES:

- 52** > states still apply the death penalty in 2022.
- 579** > executions in 18 countries were recorded in 2021, an increase of 20% compared to 2020.
- 5** > states with the highest number of executions in 2021: China, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria.
 - 25% increase in executions in Iran, with a growing number of women.
 - 140% increase in executions in Saudi Arabia.
- 3** > countries resumed executions: Belarus, Japan and the United Arab Emirates.
- 11** > states retain the death penalty for homosexuality.
 - 2,000+** > death sentences were handed down in 2021, an increase of 39% compared to 2020.
 - 28,500+** > people on death row worldwide.

The following methods of execution were used in 2021 worldwide:
beheading, hanging, execution by firearm and lethal injection.

THE 8TH WORLD CONGRESS AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

From 15 to 18 November 2022, more than a thousand participants from 90 countries are expected in Berlin, Germany, for the 8th World Congress Against the Death Penalty, organised by the NGO ECPM (Together against the Death Penalty). The largest abolitionist meeting in the world will bring together political figures, activists, committed citizens and young people from around the world for debates on the issue of the death penalty, which is still practised on all five continents.

WHY A WORLD CONGRESS?

As recent events have shown, rights, sometimes hard-won, can suddenly be called into question. Avoiding the resurgence of capital punishment is therefore a major concern in our societies. With the rise of populism and the radicalisation of approaches to security issues in certain abolitionist states, pro-death penalty movements regularly challenge abolition. Furthermore, the risk of resumption of executions is still present in retentionist countries that have not carried out executions for several years.

4 DAYS OF DEBATE AND REFLECTION ON ABOLITIONIST ISSUES

The Congress will be launched, on 15 November, by German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, in the presence of several of her European and foreign counterparts.

Numerous key witnesses, former death row prisoners and civil society figures will take the floor during the Congress, whose epicentre will be Berlin's cultural centre (Radialsystem) which will host the Abolition Village attended by numerous human rights organisations, as well as a wide range of cultural and educational activities.

The Congress will mark the culmination of the mobilisation of the world's youth led by ECPM over the past year through its #AbolitionNowTour. More than fifty young people from six countries will share their hopes and their work to advance the rights of all and to forcefully reaffirm their efforts to achieve universal abolition.

The Congress is free and open to all, but registration is compulsory for access to the event and exclusive information. Those wishing to participate, either on site or online, can register via the **"8th World Congress" Application**.



CHALLENGES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR ABOLITION

Short bios of each of the speakers listed below are available on the “8th World Congress” Application

INSTRUMENTALISATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES

Whether they utilise capital punishment to reinforce their power, to control the population, to further their political agenda, or in the context of elections, political actors are intrinsically connected to the debate surrounding the death penalty. Underlining that capital punishment is frequently a corollary of systemic human rights violations and addressing the issue of the oversimplification of public opinion, ECPM's experts and key witnesses will explore the various aspects of the instrumentalisation of the death penalty for political purposes to identify the most effective and contextually appropriate strategies to move towards abolition.

EXPERTS AND KEY WITNESSES TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE

Sherif Azer – Director of Policy at the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedom – Egypt
Christelle Vuanga – Member of the National Assembly – DRC
Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam – Professor of Neuroscience and Director of Iran Human Rights – Norway

USA: THE SLOW EROSION OF THE DEATH PENALTY

Today, the United States of America remains one of the few liberal democracies that continue to apply the death penalty: 11 executions were recorded in 2021. This is the result of a flawed, unfair and racist judicial system, which, far from delivering justice and reparation to victims' families, generates further violence.

EXPERTS AND KEY WITNESSES TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE

Robert Dunham – Executive Director of the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC) – USA
Sandra Babcock – Law Professor, Founder and Faculty Director of the Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide – USA
Blaire Andres – Head of Death Penalty Projects (USA), Reprieve – UK

HOW TO MAKE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IRREVERSIBLE?

Despite the universal trend towards the abolition of the death penalty, some abolitionist states are seeking to reintroduce it, while others that had recently expressed an intention to abolish capital punishment are now reconsidering their position. National, regional and international legal mechanisms exist to ensure the irreversibility of the abolition of the death penalty. ECPM's experts and key witnesses will explore the range of legal instruments that can be used to unequivocally abolish capital punishment and develop new arguments and strategies to address attempts to reintroduce it.

Latest news > After blasting abortion rights this summer, the ultra-conservative US Supreme Court expressed its readiness to address other issues such as the rights of African Americans, gay couples and the death penalty...

EXPERTS AND KEY WITNESSES TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE

Aurélie Plaçais – Executive Director of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty – France
Sergey Dikman – Legal Adviser, Head of Unit at the Council of Europe – France
Karen Gomez-Dumpit – Former Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission of the Philippines and Executive Committee Member at ADPAN – Philippines

AFRICA: THE NEXT ABOLITIONIST CONTINENT?

In recent years, Africa has experienced a major abolitionist trend. In 1990, only one country - Cape Verde - had abolished the death penalty. Over thirty years later, 26 of the 55 member states of the African Union have abolished the death penalty in law, 15 apply a long-term moratorium on executions and 15 retain the death penalty. This year, two new countries joined the abolitionist ranks: Central African Republic in June and Equatorial Guinea in September. Further announcements are expected to follow at the Berlin Congress. But while this momentum is to be welcomed, it must be qualified. Under the guise of fighting crime, the authorities carry out arbitrary arrests and detentions. Many prisoners suffer ill-treatment and some are tortured to death.

EXPERTS AND KEY WITNESSES TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE

Alexious Kamangila – Lawyer and Fellow at Reprieve UK – Malawi
Dr Idrissa Sow – Chair of the Working Group on the Death Penalty of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) – Senegal
Liévin Ngondji – Co-founder and President of Culture pour la paix et la justice – DRC

THE ASIAN PARADOX

Of the five continents, Asia still holds the dismal record for the highest number of reported executions. China remains the country that carries out the largest number of executions. However, it is impossible to obtain accurate figures on the use of the death penalty in China as such data are classified as state secrets. Furthermore, figures for North Korea and Vietnam, where it is suspected that executions are carried out on a massive scale, are not included in the global total of executions, as the secrecy surrounding the issue and the lack of access to independent information make it impossible to ascertain trends. Bucking the global abolitionist trend, several Asia-Pacific countries have recently resumed and increased executions. One example is Taiwan, a bastion of human rights in Asia, which continues to hold on to the death penalty. In December 2021, Japan executed three prisoners by hanging, the first executions in the country for nearly two years. And while Singapore had not reported any executions for two years, executions resumed this year with five executions in under four months.

EXPERTS AND KEY WITNESSES TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE

Dobby Chew – Executive Coordinator of ADPAN – Malaysia
Sara Kowal – Vice-President of the Capital Punishment Justice Project – Australia (not listed in the programme but presence confirmed)
M. Ravi – Lawyer – Singapore

THE LINK BETWEEN SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND THE DEATH PENALTY

At least seven countries still provide for the death penalty for the crime of rape and many others are considering reintroducing it, in blatant disregard of the views of gender and children's rights experts on the ineffectiveness of capital punishment in ending rape. While ensuring a victim-oriented approach, ECPM's experts and key witnesses will address the instrumentalisation by authorities of public demands for justice, to avoid addressing the roots of sexual violence.

EXPERTS AND KEY WITNESSES TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE

Ajita Banerjee – Research Officer at the Asian Office of ILGA – India

Sandra Babcock – Law Professor, Founder and Faculty Director of the Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide – USA

THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT OF THE DEATH PENALTY ON MINORITIES AND THOSE FROM IMPOVERISHED BACKGROUNDS

Those sentenced to death are often vulnerable people, with poverty and language barriers often resulting in a lack of compliance with legal obligations. Far too many miscarriages of justice are rooted in discrimination and stereotypes. In some states, individuals are convicted because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender or because of their political opinion or religious affiliation.

EXPERTS AND KEY WITNESSES TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE

On religious and ethnic minorities in Iran:

Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam – Professor of Neuroscience and Director of Iran Human Rights – Norway

THE IMPORTANCE OF RAISING AWARENESS AND MOBILISING THE WORLD'S YOUTH

Raising awareness and educating younger generations about the abolition of the death penalty means taking a step back to initiate reflection, showing that there are other options and approaching capital punishment from the perspective of justice and human rights. This is necessary – even in countries with a long history of abolition – because the subject still gives rise to heated debates, particularly in the wake of tragic events.

ECPM initiated the #AbolitionNowTour project: a unique mobilisation programme aimed at young people in six countries where the death penalty is still in force (Morocco, Kenya, DRC, Indonesia, Lebanon and the United States, in Texas). The aim? To propose practical solutions to advance the abolitionist cause in those countries. To this end, a delegation made up of a small group of young activists meets over a two-day period to exchange with experts (ECPM representatives, former death row prisoners or their relatives, local representatives of human rights organisations, etc.) to fuel ideas and creativity. The outcome: selection of a flagship action to be implemented within 6 months. Delegations that have implemented their actions will present their strategies to all the participants and audiences (political figures, lawyers, NGOs, students, media, etc.) at the Berlin Congress.

EXPERTS AND KEY WITNESSES TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE

Camikara Yuwono – Member of the Indonesian delegation of the Abolition Now Tour – Indonesia

Sylvia Morwabe – Lawyer and Programme Director, Crime Si Poa – Kenya

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONGRESS

DEBATES & WORKSHOPS AT THE RADIALSYSTEM IN BERLIN

A dozen conferences and debates, with numerous witnesses and experts, will address the major issues concerning capital punishment in Asia, Africa, Europe, the United States and the Middle East. The high point will be a key debate on the theme: *Death row prisoners and their lawyers: a unique relationship*. Speakers include:

Debra Milke – who spent 23 years on death row in the United States before being declared innocent;

Hank Skinner – sentenced to death in 1995 in Texas for a triple murder he has always denied. He has been on death row for 27 years;

Sandrine Ageorges-Skinner – activist and wife of Hank Skinner;

Mohamed Cheikh Ould Mkhaitir – Mauritanian blogger, initially sentenced to death for apostasy in December 2014 and released in 2019;

Fatimata M'Bay – Mauritanian lawyer and long-standing advocate for human rights in her country.

CULTURAL EVENTS

The Congress will include a **special concert by poet-writer Keith LaMar, who will be singing from his prison cell and will be accompanied by two musicians on stage in Berlin**. Detained on death row in the United States, this literature and jazz enthusiast is calling for a review of his case. He is supported by a group of musicians, coordinated by the Catalan pianist Albert Marquès, who are determined to prevent his execution, scheduled for November 2023.

Final Moments on Death Row is an **exhibition** shedding light on the death penalty in the United States, at the Henri Ford Pavilion (University of Berlin). It combines the writings of renowned New York photographer **Marc Asnin**, "Final Words", composed of the last statements of executed prisoners in the state of Texas, with **Scott Langley's** photo documentary, *Timeline of an Execution*, which captures the inside and outside of a prison during an execution.

The exhibition Faces of Abolition will be displayed in the heart of Berlin, at the entrance to Humboldt University. ECPM outlines the history of a struggle that started more than two centuries ago and continues to this day, on all continents. The exhibition highlights emblematic abolitionists, presenting their portraits and their messages, which remain as powerful as ever.



The full programme and speakers' biographies can be accessed on the Congress application (8thWorldCongress) and the ecpm.org website. Several conferences will be broadcast live on the various Congress and ECPM platforms.

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ABOUT ECPM

Founded in 2000, ECPM is a leading global association fighting for universal abolition of the death penalty.

With a presence in a dozen countries across the world, ECPM has been conducting intense advocacy work with national and international bodies for the past twenty years, in particular by supporting local actors and by organising, every three years, the biggest abolitionist event in the world: the World Congress Against the Death Penalty.

ECPM also founded the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty.

For more information: www.ecpm.org

ECPM SPOKESPERSONS:



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and lawyer at the Paris Bar.



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de l'Homme



Nicolas PERRON,
ECPM Director of Programmes



Richard SÉDILLOT,
ECPM spokesperson
and human rights lawyer

ECPM PARTNERS AT THE 8TH CONGRESS



Aurélie Plaçais,
Spokesperson for
the World Coalition Against
the Death Penalty



Ambassador Günter SAUTTER



Luise Amtsberg

Director of the **World Coalition Against the Death Penalty**. She is an expert on issues related to the abolition of the death penalty worldwide. She has nearly 15 years of experience in international advocacy, including with the United Nations human rights mechanisms.

Director General for International Order, the United Nations and Arms Control in the German Federal Foreign Office.

Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid at the Federal Foreign Office

The abolitionist movement was born out of several stories, involving activists, political figures, diplomats, citizens and artists from all over the world, who have been working with ECPM for more than 20 years, including **Robert BADINTER**, ECPM Honorary President.

They take the floor see the video





ABOLITION NOW



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