

# 4<sup>th</sup> REGIONAL CONGRESS ON THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

JULY 11-12, 2023  
AMMAN-JORDAN  
PARTICIPANT'S HANDBOOK

Organised by



In partnership with



# PROGRAM

**JULY 10, 2023 (MONDAY)** French Institute - Sharia College Street 4, Amman, Jordan

6.30 PM



**Congress Kick off - Screening of the film**  
**The Swallows Of Kabul** (2019)  
by Zabou Breitman and Eléa Gobbé-Mévellec,  
followed by a talk.

**JULY 11, 2023 (TUESDAY)** Grand Hyatt Hotel - Hussein Bin Ali St Amman, Jordan

8.30 AM \ 9.30 AM  
Ballroom foyer area

Registration

9.30 AM \ 11.00 AM  
Iris Jasmine Meeting Room

**Opening session**  
Musical interlude by Crescendo Music & Art Academy\*

11.00 AM \ 11.30 AM

Coffee break

11.30 AM \ 1.30 PM  
Iris Jasmine Meeting Room

**Plenary session: Situation in the region: achievements and expectations**  
This plenary session aims to foster constructive dialogue to highlight progress towards abolition of the death penalty in the region. Presentations will focus on good practices and avenues towards the adoption of moratoria on the use of the death penalty. The discussion will also address the challenges that remain, including data transparency. The issue of cooperation with international organisations will also be a key focus.

**Moderator:** Sherif Azer, Director of Programs, Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedom

- **Suzanne Jabbour**, Chairperson of the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- **Mohamad Habash**, President of the Islamic Studies Centre in Damascus
- **Taghreed Jaber**, Regional Director, Penal Reform International in Middle East and North Africa
- **Ammar Dweik**, Director General of the Independent Commission for Human Rights (NHRI) in Palestine
- **Andrés Pérez**, Human Rights Officer - Death Penalty, Prevention of Genocide, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

1.30 PM \ 3.00 PM  
Ballroom terrace

Lunch break

3.00 PM \ 4.30 PM  
Iris Jasmine Meeting Room

**Roundtable: The scope of the death penalty in legal frameworks**  
This roundtable will bring together experts to analyse the various legal frameworks and some of the categories of offences punishable by death in the region, in particular those related to drug use and trafficking, national security and terrorism. Participants will exchange experiences and strategies to limit the scope of the death penalty. The underlying aim of this session is to consider ways to limit the use of death penalty to the most serious crimes, as a step towards abolition.

**Moderator:** Zaki Sarraf, MENA death penalty caseworker, Reprieve

- **Mahmood Amiry Moghaddam**, Director, Iran Human Rights
- **Nehal Nabil**, Researcher, Criminal Justice Unit, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Right
- **Laithy Al Alawneh**, Attorney at law, former judge
- **Ali Adubsi**, Founding Member and director, European Saudi Organization for Human Rights (Remote intervention)
- **Karen Peters**, Regional Drugs and Health Programme Officer, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (Remote intervention)

4.30 PM \ 5.00 PM

Coffee break

5.00 PM \ 6.00 PM  
Zuhair Room

**Workshop: Lawyers**  
This workshop will explore the fundamental role of lawyers in representing people facing the death sentence. Experiences, good practices, major obstacles, tools, successful legal strategies and case law will be discussed.

**Facilitators:**

- **Rafic Zakharia**, Lawyer, Member, Lebanese Association for Civil Rights
- **Leila Ali Karami**, SOAS, Associate member, Center for Iranian studies
- **Osamah Alsanad**, Lawyer, Kuwait

5.00 PM \ 6.00 PM  
Labeed Room

**Workshop: Journalists and media**  
Journalists and media, including social networks, may have a positive role in raising awareness by focusing on concrete examples of the use of the death penalty. This workshop will discuss key issues in relation to communication, and will allow journalists and communication professionals to share their views, expertise, tools and experience. Participants will be invited to contribute successful communication strategies and reflections on how to ensure that communication on individual cases respects the "do no harm" principle.

**Facilitators:**

- **Kambiz Ghafouri**, Journalist, Iran Human Rights
- **Antoine Ajoury**, Journalist, L'Orient le jour, Lebanon

Ballroom terrace

**Cocktail diner for all participants**  
Musical interlude by Crescendo Music & Art Academy\*

**JULY 12, 2023 (WEDNESDAY)** Grand Hyatt Hotel - Hussein Bin Ali St Amman, Jordan

9.30 AM \ 11.00 AM  
Iris Jasmine Meeting Room

**Roundtable: Administration of Justice**  
This roundtable will discuss a range of issues related to the death penalty and the administration of justice. The role of judges, the psychological effects they may experience and their involvement in advocacy will be analysed. Experts will also consider ways to ensure that those facing the death penalty are afforded special protections and guarantees of a fair trial. They will address the independence and training of judges, as well as respect for guarantees set out in Criminal Procedure Codes and international standards. This session will also be an opportunity for participants to hear from judges involved in hearing death penalty cases.

**Moderator:** Haitham Shibili, Regional Director, Penal Reform International in Middle East and North Africa, Jordan

- **Judge Rizgar Ameen Hamahsaeed**, Former Chief Judge of the Iraqi Special Tribunal's AL-Dujail trial
- **Javaid Rehman**, Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (Remote interv.)
- **Hadeel Abdel Aziz**, Executive director of the Justice center for legal Aid (JCLA), ICJ member Jordan
- **Saloua Boukaouit**, Bahrein center for Human Rights

11.00 AM \ 11.30 AM

Coffee break

11.30 AM \ 1.00 PM  
Iris Jasmine Meeting Room

**Roundtable: Population groups**  
Experts will discuss the ways in which the death penalty might differently or disproportionately affect certain populations, such as women, children, minorities and foreign nationals, including migrant workers.

**Moderator:** Hala Al Ahed, Lawyer, Front Line Human Rights laureate in 2023

- **Sana Farrukh**, Team Lead Policy and Advocacy, Justice Project Pakistan
- **Reem Alsalem**, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Jordan
- **Lina Al-Hathloul**, Head of monitoring and communication, ALQST (Video message)
- **Duaa Dhainy**, Researcher, Case Worker, European Saudi Organization for Human Rights
- **Taimoor Aliassi**, Kurdistan Human Rights Association

1.00 PM \ 2.00 PM

Lunch break

2.00 PM \ 3.30 PM  
Iris Jasmine Meeting Room

**Roundtable: The awareness raising**

This roundtable will highlight awareness raising activities and the role of non-state actors in the fight against the death penalty. Experiences and best practices among artists, young people, and civil society representatives will be shared with participants.

**Moderator:** Tanya Awad Ghorra, LACR

- Layth Abdulmir, Iraqi filmmaker, Director of The Executioner's Tears (2013)
- Asem Rababa, President, Adaleh Center for Human Rights Studies, Jordan
- Antoinette Chahine, Former deathrow prisoner, Lebanon
- Amal Faqih, General director, Human Rights and Democracy Media Centers in Palestine

3.30 PM \ 4.00 PM

Coffee break

4.00 PM \ 5.00 PM  
Zuhair Room

**Workshop: Conflict and post-conflict situations**

Several states in the region are in conflict and post-conflict situations (Iraq, Syria, Yemen). This workshop will allow participants to share their experiences on how the death penalty is used in these contexts and the main challenges. It will address key issues, including legislative and judicial reforms in post conflict contexts, and how to fight impunity without the death penalty.

**Facilitators:**

- Raheeq Al Wardi, Administrative officer, NoPhotoZone
- Samir Noory, Spokesperson, Organisation for the Abolition of the Death Penalty in Iraq

4.00 PM \ 5.00 PM  
Labeed Room

**Workshop: Documentation on use of the death penalty**

This workshop will address the main issues in relation to transparency. Experts will discuss differences in the level of transparency from one state to another and share good practices on data collection and statistics.

**Facilitators:**

- Mahmood Amiry Moghaddam, Director, Iran Human Rights
- Sherif Azer, Head of policy, Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedom
- Duaa Dhainy, Researcher, Case Worker, European Saudi Organization for Human Rights

4.00 PM \ 5.00 PM  
Boardroom 1

**Workshop: Universal Periodic Review**

This workshop will explore how the issue of the death penalty can be raised in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, a mechanism allowing all Member States of the United Nations to review the human rights records of all other Member States. Participants will also have the opportunity to learn about interactions with the UPR as stakeholders and gain practical insights into the processing of communications and the preparation of reports.

5.00 PM \ 6.00 PM  
Iris Jasmine Meeting Room

**Closing session**

Musical interlude by Crescendo Music & Art Academy\*

## ORGANISER



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](http://www.ecpm.org)

## PARTNERS



Penal Reform International (PRI) is an independent international non-governmental organisation that structures its work through a policy programme, regional programmes, and a governance and strategy programme that ensures learning and impact. PRI operates globally with offices in multiple locations.

We work to promote criminal justice systems that uphold human rights for all and do no harm.

We run practical human rights programmes and support reforms that make criminal justice fair and effective. Our primary objectives are to secure trials that are impartial, sentencing practices that are proportionate and promote social rehabilitation, and humane conditions of detention where alternatives to imprisonment are not possible.

We continue to join efforts to abolish the death penalty, which is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and a violation of the right to life. We work to ensure that when there is a moratorium or abolition of capital punishment in any given country it is replaced with humane alternatives. In view of this we challenge life imprisonment without parole.

For more information: [www.penalreform.org](http://www.penalreform.org)



The Adaleh Center for Human Rights Studies is a non-governmental, non-profit organization founded on September 2003 and based in Amman, Jordan.

Its mission is to enforce human rights values in Jordan and the Arab world, through building the capacity of non-governmental organizations and practitioners working in the field of human rights, democracy and justice.


The center operates in accordance with all universal human rights declarations, principles, and charters issued by the United Nations.

Its vision: to create a mindful society that enjoys basic human rights and freedoms, free from discrimination and violations against human rights, and where values of dignity, freedom, equality, tolerance, and respect are widely spread.

Its objectives are:

- To elevate the respect towards freedom and human rights.
- To enhance democracy principles and the rule of law.
- To activate the role of the judiciary and to ensure its independence.
- To enhance the knowledge of the law and to ensure its independence.
- To spread awareness on human rights.
- To invigorate the human rights situation and to document human rights violations.

For more information: <https://www.adaleh-center.org/>



**\* Crescendo Music & Art Academy**  
Musicians: Omar Abbad (Oud) - Lara Elayyan (Singer) - Rula Albarghouthi (Qanoon)  
- Quasi Srour (Nai) - Belal Ashnouti (Percussion) - Awss Marji (Bass / Guitar)  
- Hani Alkarrain (Piano)

## WHY THE MIDDLE EAST?

With 147 countries and territories having abolished the death penalty in law or in practice and a number of countries practicing fewer executions, abolition appears to be a universal trend. However, certain regions are still strongly resisting and continue to extensively use the death penalty.

Out of the 15 targeted countries, 3 have been observing a moratorium on executions for at least 5 years: Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.

## TARGETED COUNTRIES

- Those which observed a moratorium in the past years (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine) or abstained on the UNGA resolution calling for a universal moratorium on the application of the death penalty (United Arab Emirates)
- Retentionist countries where progress has been possible in the past and/or could be considered and/or where civil society is active (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt, Qatar, Bahrain etc...)

### THE 4<sup>TH</sup> REGIONAL CONGRESS ON THE DEATH PENALTY

**Date:** July 11-12, 2023

**Duration:** 2 days

**Location:** GRAND HYATT AMMAN, 6 Hussein Bin Ali Street, Amman, Jordan

**Number of participants:** around 200 participants from at least 15 countries

**Structure:**

An opening session,  
1 plenary,  
4 roundtables,  
5 workshops  
and a closing session

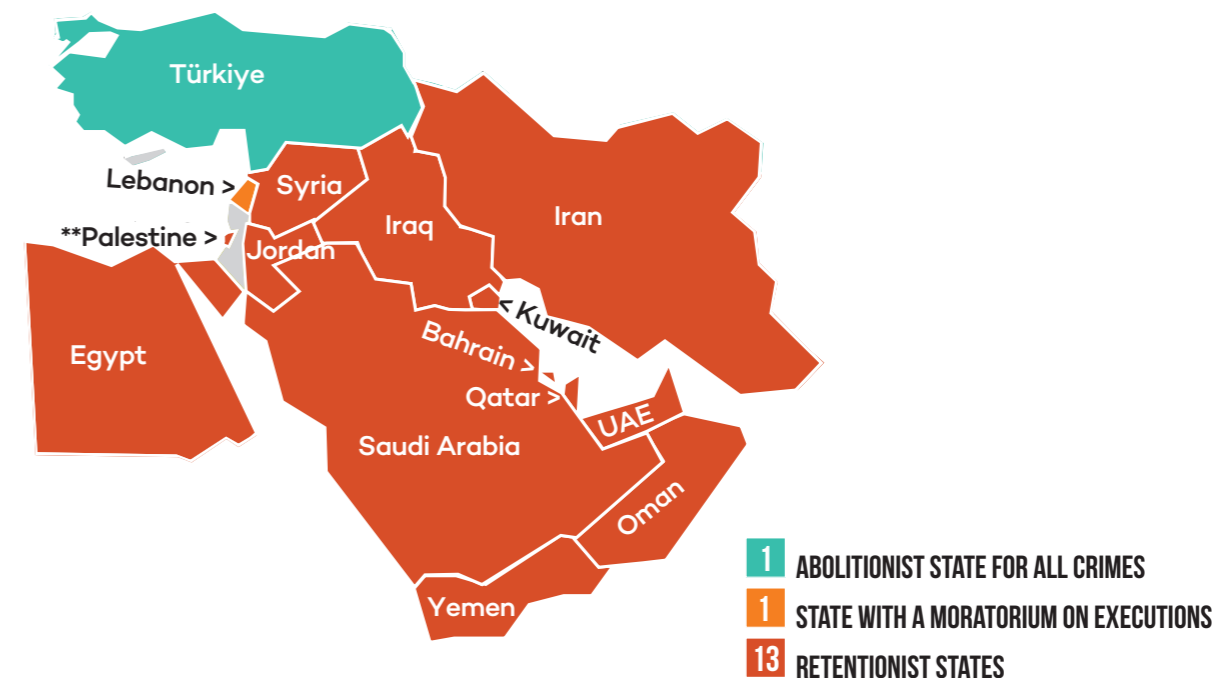
**Organiser:**

ECPM – Ensemble contre la peine de mort (Together against the death penalty)

**Partners:**

Penal Reform International (PRI) and Adaleh Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS)

## THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE MIDDLE EAST - 2022



## THE DEATH PENALTY WORLDWIDE - 2022

111 ABOLITIONIST STATES FOR ALL CRIMES

States or territories where the death penalty is abolished.

9 ABOLITIONIST STATES FOR ORDINARY CRIMES

States or territories where the death penalty is abolished unless there are exceptional circumstances.

27 STATES WITH A MORATORIUM ON EXECUTIONS

States or territories where the death penalty is implemented but no executions have been carried out for at least 10 years and which did not oppose the latest UN resolution for a universal moratorium on executions and/or having ratified OP2\*.

51 RETENTIONIST STATES

States or territories where the death penalty is implemented.

\* Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

\*\* Palestine is a particular case: it cannot vote the moratorium resolution, has ratified OP2, but the death penalty is still applied in Gaza (last documented executions in 2022).

# ABOLITION NOW

## CONTACTS

**Sarah Hajjar**

Regional Congress Coordinator  
shajjar@ecpm.org

Co-funded by  
the European Union



Norwegian Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs

  
**MINISTÈRE  
DE L'EUROPE  
ET DES AFFAIRES  
ÉTRANGÈRES**  
*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra