

## FINAL DECLARATION

July 12, 2023 - Grand Hyatt Amman

### CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES FROM:

BAHRAIN, EGYPT, IRAN, IRAQ, JORDAN, KUWAIT, LEBANON, PALESTINE,  
SAUDI ARABIA, SYRIA, TÜRKIYE AND UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.

#### WE

The participants of the Amman Congress, 4<sup>th</sup> Regional Congress on the Death Penalty and first Congress held in the Middle East, on July 11 and 12, 2023, organized by ECPM - Together Against the Death Penalty in partnership with Penal Reform International and Adaleh Center for Human Rights Studies;

#### ADOPT

This Declaration as a result of multilevel exchange on organizational and personal experiences, after informed, inclusive, respectful debates, and shared expertise;

#### WELCOME

- The unstoppable development of the abolitionist movement in the world where nearly three quarter of states have abolished the death penalty in law or in practice;
- The fact that 32 countries out of 57 members of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have abolished capital punishment (20 states) or observe a moratorium on executions (12 states);
- The fact that four states from the Middle East abstained or voted in favor of the UNGA resolution in 2022 (United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye);
- The acceptance of recommendations by 5 states from the Middle East during their last UPR (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen);

#### ACKNOWLEDGE

- That the death penalty is revenge rather than justice; it is only a way to perpetuate a circle of violence mostly targeting minorities, poor and vulnerable populations;
- That the vast majority of executions in the region are conducted in 4 countries : Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iraq;
- That out of the 15 countries of the Middle East, only Türkiye has abolished the death penalty for all crimes, 3 have been observing a moratorium on executions for at least 5 years: Lebanon (2004), Jordan (2017) and Palestine (West Bank 2018);

#### RECALL

- That the right to life is protected by all international and regional human rights standards, particularly by Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- That the abolition of the death penalty is essential to protect the right to life and the right to dignity inherent to all human beings;

- That the international criminal courts laws do not punish genocides, crimes against humanity, and war crimes by death penalty;
- That the more democratic a country is, the less legal or used the death penalty;

#### CALL ON

- The Middle Eastern states to work on a step by step strategy towards the abolition by establishing a moratorium and reducing the scope of the death penalty;
- The Middle Eastern states to consider a favorable vote of the UN Resolution calling for a universal moratorium;
- The Middle Eastern states to momentarily put very strict limits on the use of the death penalty in accordance with international human rights standards, including limiting the scope of death penalty to the most serious crimes as defined by international law, forbidding the use of death penalty on minors at the time of the alleged offense;
- The states from the Middle East that have not yet acceded to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to ratify it;
- The Arab League and the OIC to address the issue through serious and pacific dialogue engaging all stakeholders in order to advance positively towards the abolition, and to take a serious stand on what the Israeli Knesset is debating, regarding the reestablishment of death penalty on Palestinian convicts, that have passed the first round;
- The Media networks and journalists from the Middle East to address the abolition topic away from reactive sensationalism that comes whenever heinous crimes are committed in order to contribute to a rational, serene and peaceful debate outside strong emotions and revenge feelings;
- The Law & Bar Associations to further engage in the effort towards abolition;
- The Judges to consider the negative effect of death sentencing on their own conscience, to remember their fundamental place and role in fostering advocacy for legislative reforms towards abolition;
- The Civil Society from the Middle East to join their forces aiming at abolishing death penalty;
- The Civil Society to raise awareness among new allies, such as influencers and opinion makers, in culture, sports and private sectors;

**Finally, we call upon the youth of the Middle East to be part of the worldwide abolitionist movement for a better world.**