

**FINAL DECLARATION- 11th JULY 2023
REGIONAL CONGRESS ON THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE MID-
DLE EAST
GRAND HYATT HOTEL – AMMAN – JORDAN**

WE

The participants of the **Amman Congress**, 4th Regional Congress on the Death Penalty and first Congress to be held in the Middle-East, between 11 and 12 July 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 and respectful debates, and shared expertise

WELCOME

- the unstoppable development of the abolitionist movement in the world where nearly ¾ of States have abolished the death penalty in law or in practice;
- the fact that 32 country out of 57 members of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) are abolitionist in law or in practice where 20 states have abolished capital punishment and 12 observe a moratorium on executions;
- The four states from the Middle East that abstained or voted in favor of the UNGA resolution in 2022 (United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey)
- The acceptance of recommendations by 5 states from the Middle East during their last UPR (Saudi Arabia, Bahrein, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen)

ACKNOWLEDGE

- that the death penalty is revenge rather than justice ; it is just 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 from the Middle East, only Turkey have abolished the death penalty for all crimes, 3 have been observing a moratorium on executions for at least 5 years and more: Lebanon (2004), Jordan (2017) and Palestine (West Bank 2018).

RECALL

the right to life is protected by all international and regional human rights legislation, particularly Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

abolition of the death penalty is essential to protect the right to life and the right to dignity inherent to all human beings

International criminal courts laws do not punish genocides, crimes against humanity, and war crimes by death penalty.

the most democratic a country is, the less the death penalty is legal or used.

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 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;
- Arab countries that have not yet acceded to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to join it;
- the Arab League and the OIC to address the issue through serious and pacific dialogue engaging all stakeholders in order to advance positively in the direction of steps towards the abolition;
- 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 penalty sentencing on their own conscience, to remember their fundamental place and role in fostering the 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, Sport and Private fields

Finally we call the Youth from the region to be part of the worldwide abolitionist movement for a better world