

A black and white photograph of the United Nations Secretariat Building, a tall, modern skyscraper with a grid of windows. In the foreground, a long line of flagpoles extends from the left towards the building, each flying a different national flag. The sky is bright and clear. The overall composition is a low-angle shot, making the building appear imposing and monumental.

# UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A MORATORIUM ON THE USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY

**KEY  
CONSIDERATIONS  
IN THE VOTE**

**EC  
PM** TOGETHER  
AGAINST  
THE DEATH  
PENALTY



# ANALYSIS OF THE 2024 VOTE

## LIST OF STATES BY VOTING POSITION<sup>3</sup>

### 130 STATES VOTED IN FAVOUR

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, **Antigua and Barbuda**, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cabo Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, **Gabon**, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, **Kenya**, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, **Morocco**, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru (Republic of), Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, **São Tomé and Príncipe**, Serbia, **Seychelles**, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, **Somalia**, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, **Vanuatu, Zambia**

### 32 STATES VOTED AGAINST

Bahrain, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Libya, Maldives, **Mauritania**, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, **Papua New Guinea**, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, Sudan, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Yemen

### 22 STATES ABSTAINED

**Bahamas, Bangladesh**, Belarus, Burundi, Cameroon, **Comoros**, Cuba, **Democratic Republic of Congo**, Eswatini, Guinea, Guyana, Indonesia, Laos, Lesotho, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Zimbabwe

### 9 STATES ABSENT

Afghanistan, **Central African Republic, Dominica, Grenada, Marshall Islands**, Senegal, South Sudan, **Syria**, Venezuela

<sup>3</sup> States shown in bold changed their vote between 2022 and 2024.

## CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES<sup>4</sup>

In 2024, of the 69 states taking part in the vote that have not abolished the death penalty, 40 had not carried out any executions for 10 years or more. Of these 40 states, only 15 voted in a manner consistent with their national situation, by voting in favour of the 2024 resolution for a universal moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

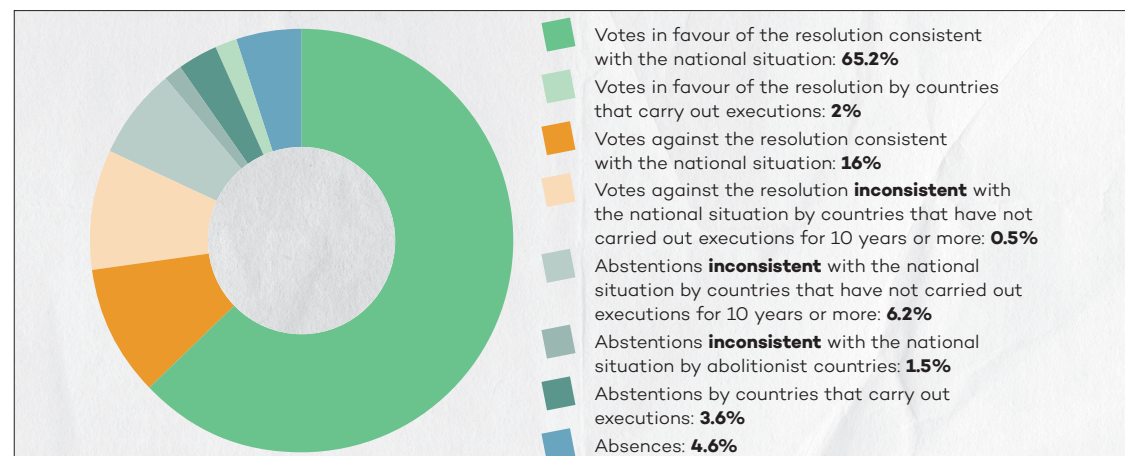
### ABOLITIONIST STATES AND STATES THAT HAVE NOT CARRIED OUT EXECUTIONS FOR AT LEAST 10 YEARS BUT DID NOT VOTE IN FAVOUR OF THE RESOLUTION

**States that voted against:** Barbados, Belize, Brunei Darussalam, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago

**States that abstained:** Bahamas, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Guinea, Guyana, Laos, Lesotho, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe

**Absent states:** Central African Republic, Dominica, Grenada, Marshall Islands, Senegal, Venezuela

## VOTE CONSISTENCY IN 2024

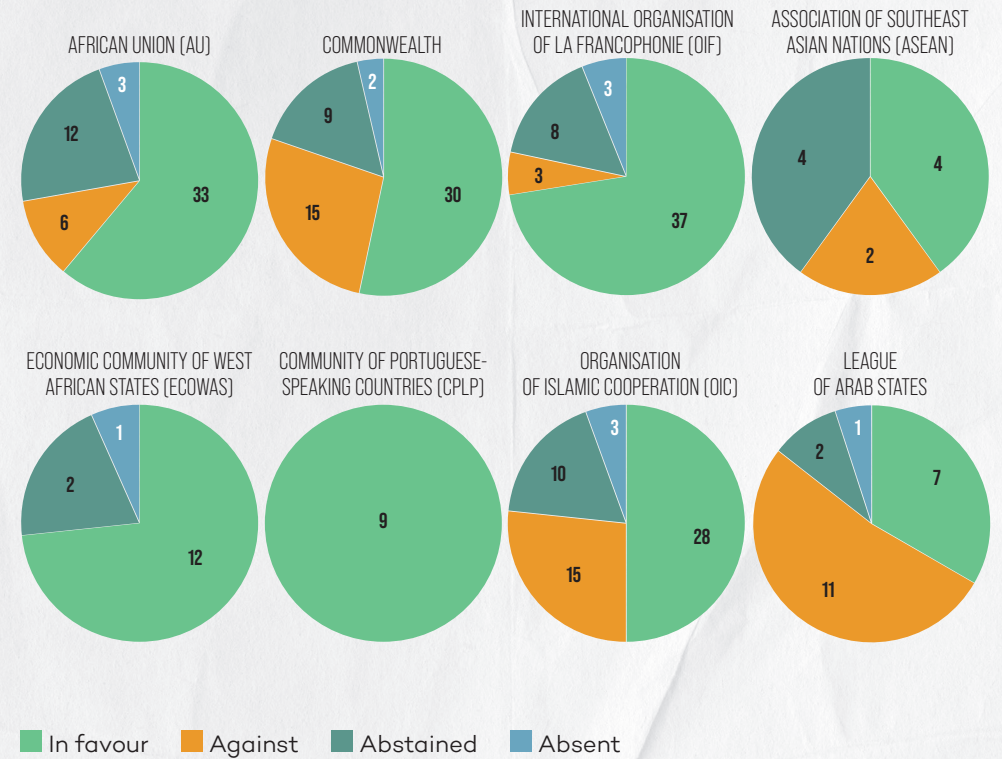


<sup>4</sup> For further details on the consistency of votes with regard to national situations, see the analysis of the vote on the Moratorium Resolution at the 2024 plenary session, available on the ECPM website.

## ANALYSIS OF THE 2024 VOTE BY REGION



## ANALYSIS OF THE 2024 VOTE BY INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (IGO)

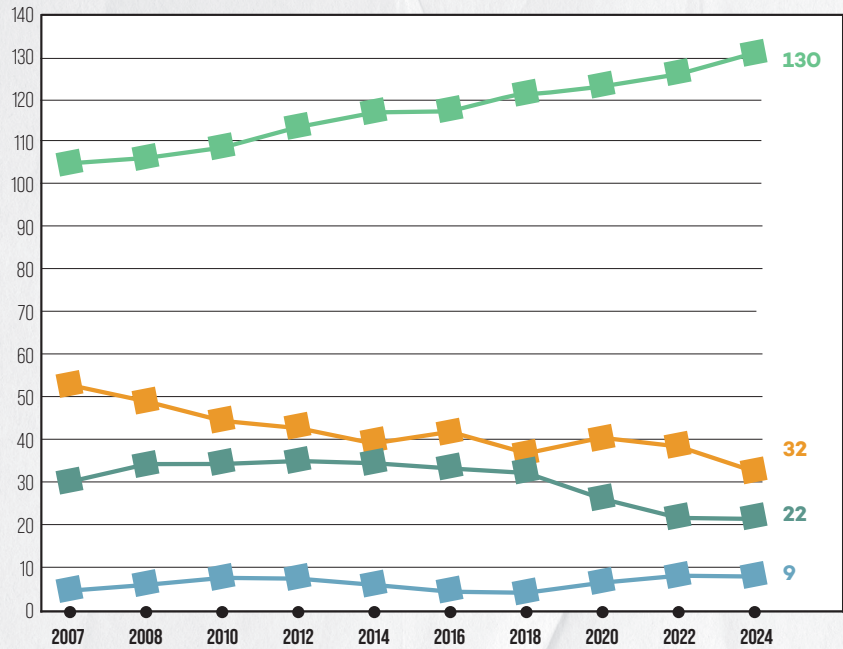


Within international organisations, a minority of member states of OIF and the AU opposed the resolution. Within the OIC and ASEAN, more than half of states voted in favour of the resolution or abstained. The League of Arab States is the only organisation in which a majority of member states voted against the resolution.

## ANALYSIS OF VOTING TRENDS ACROSS THE 10 RESOLUTIONS (2007-2024)

Since 2007, support for the resolution has steadily increased, reaching a record high of 130 votes in favour in 2024.

### VOTING TRENDS



■ In favour ■ Against ■ Abstained ■ Absent

To view changes in voting patterns for each UN member state since 2007, see the ECPM website



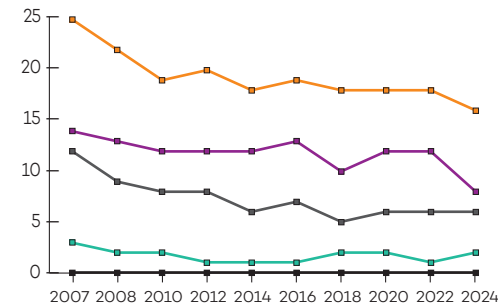
## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

The strongest support for the resolution comes from Europe, Africa and Oceania. Asia remains the least supportive continent, despite positive developments since 2020. The number of votes in favour by Asian states increased from 18 in 2018 to 21 in 2020 and 22 in 2022 and 2024.

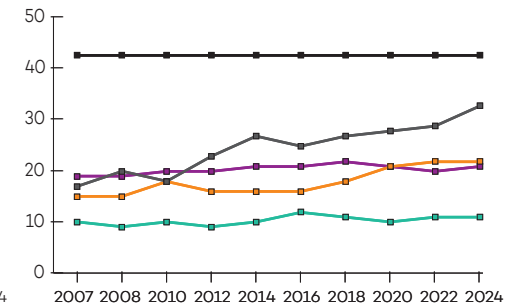
The 2024 vote was also marked by a decline in the number of votes against the resolution by Asian states, for the first time since 2018.

Over the course of the 10 votes on the moratorium resolution, support by states in Africa rose from 17 votes in favour in 2007 to 33 in 2024, while support by Asian states rose from 15 votes in favour in 2007 to 22 in 2024. In the Americas, the number of votes in favour remained stable across the 10 plenary sessions, while the number of votes against fell from 14 in 2007 to 8 in 2024.

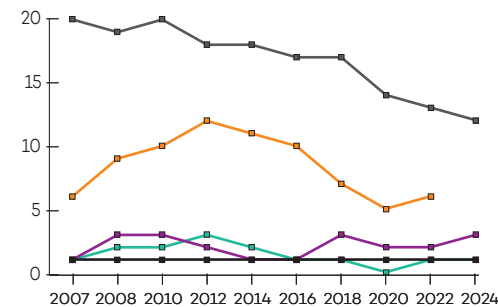
### TREND IN VOTES AGAINST



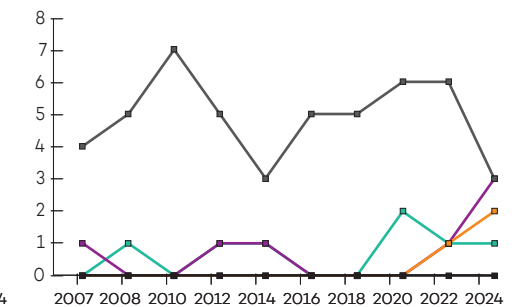
### TREND IN VOTES IN FAVOUR



### TREND IN ABSTENTIONS



### TREND IN ABSENCES



— Oceania (14 States) — Americas (53 States) — Asia (46 States)  
 — Africa (54 States) — Europe (44 States)

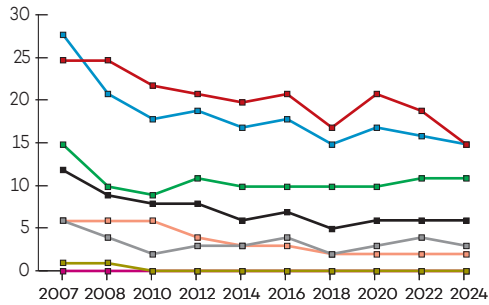
# ANALYSIS BY INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (IGO)

An analysis of states' votes according to their membership of different IGOs shows an overall positive trend.

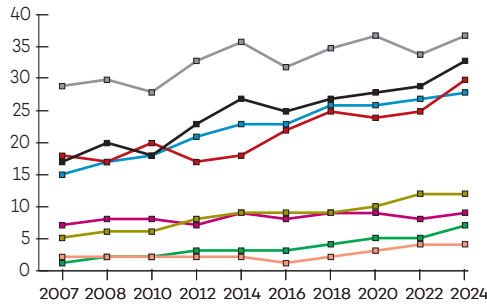
It has even been possible to observe a reversal in voting patterns among member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), from 15 votes in favour and 28 against in 2007, to 28 votes in favour and 15 against in 2024.

The League of Arab States remains the only IGO with a higher number of votes against than votes in favour. Nevertheless, trend analysis reveals that it too is following the overall positive trajectory.

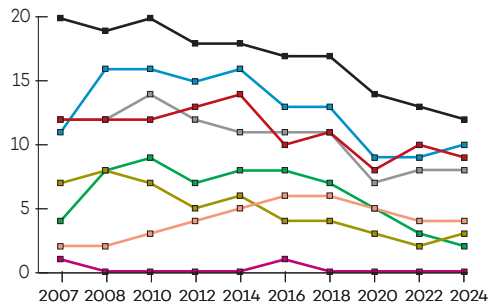
## TREND IN VOTES AGAINST



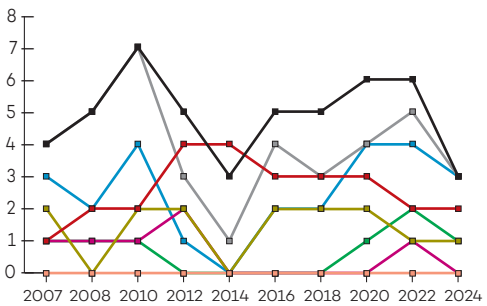
## TREND IN VOTES IN FAVOUR



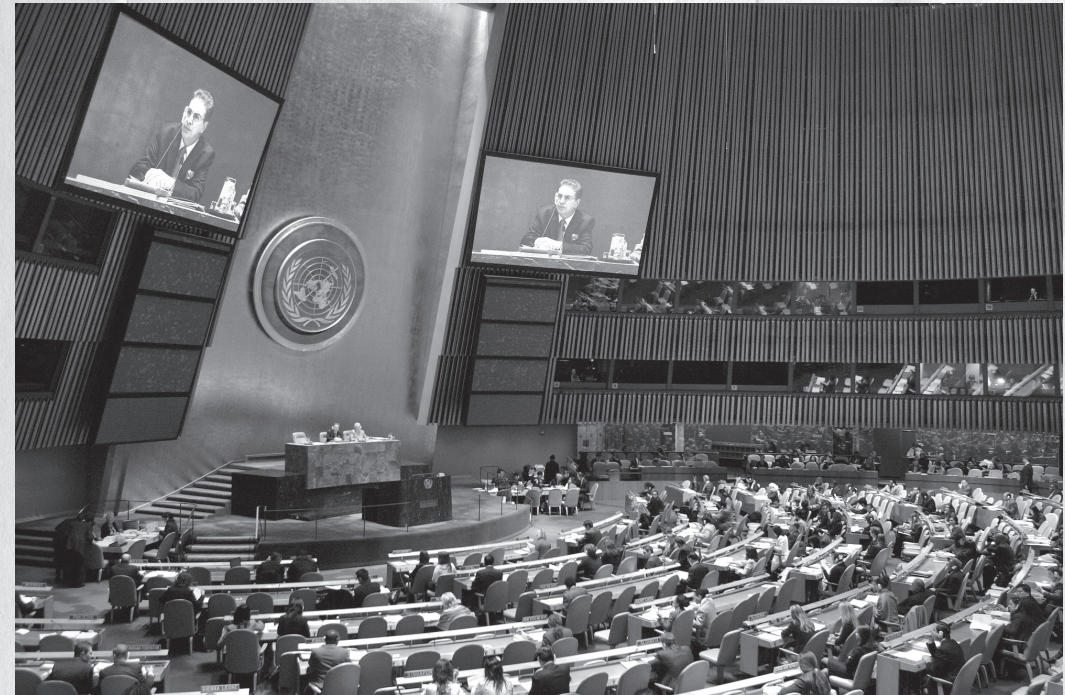
## TREND IN ABSTENTIONS



## TREND IN ABSENCES

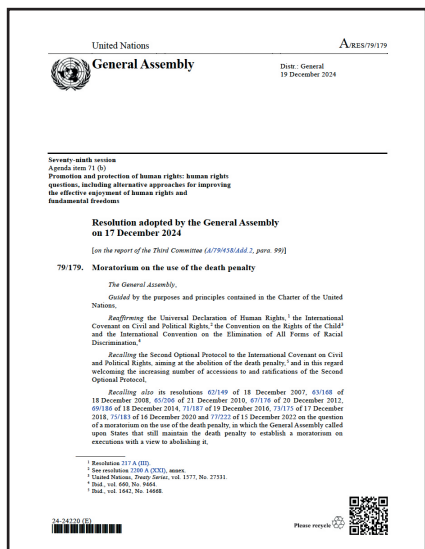


- League of Arab States (22 members)
- Commonwealth (56 members)
- ASEAN (10 members)
- CPLP (9 members)
- African Union (AU) (54 members)
- OIF (51 members)
- ECOWAS (15 members)
- OIC (57 members)



# TEXT OF THE 2024 RESOLUTION

The 2024 resolution (A/RES/79/179)\* maintains the provisions introduced in 2022, aimed at strengthening the text and calling on states to ensure better protection for those sentenced to death.



The text emphasises the need to improve conditions in detention for persons on death row, “by evaluating, promoting, protecting and improving their physical and mental health”.

It recognises “the discriminatory application of the death penalty to women”.

It calls on states to guarantee access to a fair trial by ensuring “a fair and public trial and the right to legal assistance” in proceedings that may lead to the imposition of the death penalty.

The text also calls for greater transparency regarding the use of capital punishment, in order to eliminate “discriminatory practices or impact”.

\* The full text of the resolution can be found at the end of this brochure.

## STATES SPONSORING THE RESOLUTION

### MAIN SPONSORS

Before each voting cycle, the text of the resolution is revised by a working group composed of several volunteer abolitionist states.

The sponsor states also work to renew the membership of the working group, with a focus on ensuring better representation of abolitionist states from all continents.

### CO-SPONSORS

Co-sponsor states are mobilised by the main sponsors to support the drafting of the text and advocacy efforts aimed at encouraging states to vote in favour of the resolution. They are also encouraged to join the core working group.

Once the sponsors agree on the text, it is formally tabled in the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly.<sup>5</sup>

## LIST OF CO-SPONSOR STATES IN 2024<sup>6</sup>

Albania, **Argentina**, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, **Italy**, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

<sup>5</sup> ECPM, “What is the UN resolution for a moratorium on the application of the death penalty?”, Infographic.

<sup>6</sup> States shown in bold tabled the resolution in the Third Committee in 2024.

## INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS CALLING FOR SUPPORT FOR THE MORATORIUM RESOLUTION

### AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS (ACHPR)

In 2014, the African Commission adopted the Cotonou Declaration, which calls on “legislators in Africa to review their national laws and enact legislation abolishing the death penalty” and on African states “to vote in favour of the proposed United Nations General Assembly Resolution... calling for a universal moratorium on... the death penalty.”

In 2019, the ACHPR issued a resolution on the abolition of the death penalty in Africa, in which it “[u]rges States Parties that still retain the death penalty to observe a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to abolishing it in conformity with resolutions ACHPR/Res.42(XXVI)99 and ACHPR/Res.136 (XXXIV)08 of the Commission and the seven resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations”.<sup>7</sup>

In 2024, during its 81<sup>st</sup> ordinary session, the ACHPR called on African states to vote in favour of the resolution: “The Commission: Urges African States to vote in favour of the United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for a universal moratorium on the use of the death penalty.”<sup>8</sup>

### EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

Since 2007, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has expressed its support for the resolution and urged member states to do the same:

“The Assembly calls on all member and observer states of the Council of Europe to actively support the initiative for the abolition of the death penalty in the UN General Assembly and to make the best use of their influence in order to convince countries that are still on the sidelines to join in. In this context, it warmly welcomes the resolution in the same spirit, adopted by the European Parliament on 26 April 2007, on the initiative for a universal moratorium on the death penalty.”<sup>9</sup>

This support has been reiterated over the years.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> ACHPR, Resolution on the Abolition of the Death Penalty in Africa, ACHPR/Res. 416 (LXIV) 2019, 14 May 2019.

<sup>8</sup> ACHPR, Resolution on the United Nations General Assembly Biannual Vote Calling for a Moratorium on the Use of the Death Penalty, ACHPR, Res. 614 (LXXXI) 2024, 14 September 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Parliamentary Assembly, Resolution 1560 (2007), Promotion by Council of Europe member states of an international moratorium on the death penalty, 26 June 2007.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Council of Europe, Joint declaration by the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the European and World Day against the Death Penalty, 10 October 2018; Council of Europe, European and World Day Against the Death Penalty: Joint statement by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the High Representative, on behalf of the European Union, 10 October 2023.

## WHAT IS AT STAKE IN THE 2026 VOTE?

With the vote scheduled for December 2026 in New York, actors working for the abolition of the death penalty hope that support for the resolution will continue to grow, confirming the trend observed since 2007.

One of the main issues in the vote concerns the consistency of states' voting position with their national situations. Several states that apply a moratorium on the death penalty adopt positions that are inconsistent with the situation at the national level, by abstaining, not taking part in the vote, or voting against the resolution.

While progress towards universal abolition is observed each year, the situation regarding the death penalty at the international level remains deeply concerning. Since 2024, there has been an alarming rise in executions in the last remaining retentionist countries that continue to carry out executions, as well as attempts in some states to roll back moratoriums or abolition of the death penalty. In this context, the work to mobilise support for the 2026 vote on the resolution remains critical.

### INDICATIVE TIMELINE

#### September 2026:

Opening of the 81<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

#### November 2026:

Vote on the resolution in the Third Committee.

#### December 2026:

Vote on the resolution in UNGA plenary session.

## TEXT OF THE MORATORIUM RESOLUTION ADOPTED IN 2024

### RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 17 DECEMBER 2024

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/79/458/Add.2, para. 99)]

#### A/RES/79/179 - Moratorium on the use of the death penalty

*The General Assembly,*

*Guided* by the purposes and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations,

*Reaffirming* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,

*Recalling* the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and in this regard welcoming the increasing number of accessions to and ratifications of the Second Optional Protocol,

*Recalling also* its resolutions 62/149 of 18 December 2007, 63/168 of 18 December 2008, 65/206 of 21 December 2010, 67/176 of 20 December 2012, 69/186 of 18 December 2014, 71/187 of 19 December 2016, 73/175 of 17 December 2018, 75/183 of 16 December 2020 and 77/222 of 15 December 2022 on the question of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, in which the General Assembly called upon States that still maintain the death penalty to establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing it,

*Recalling further* all relevant decisions and resolutions of the Human Rights Council, the most recent of which was resolution 54/35 of 13 October 2023,

*Mindful* that any miscarriage or failure of justice in the implementation of the death penalty is irreversible and irreparable,

*Convinced* that a moratorium on the use of the death penalty contributes to respect for human dignity and to the enhancement and progressive development of human rights, and considering that there is no conclusive evidence of the deterrent value of the death penalty,

*Noting* ongoing local and national debates and regional initiatives on the death penalty, as well as the readiness of an increasing number of Member States to make available to the public information on the use of the death penalty, and also, in this regard, the decision by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 26/2 of 26 June 2014 to convene biennial high-level panel discussions in order to further exchange views on the question of the death penalty,

*Recognizing* the role of national human rights institutions and civil society in contributing to ongoing local and national debates and regional initiatives on the death penalty,

*Noting* the long-term reductions in reported executions, as well as the increase in commutations of death sentences, and welcoming all measures taken by States towards limiting the application of the death penalty,

*Expressing with deep concern* that, despite the global trend towards limiting the application of the death penalty, there has been a recent surge in reported executions,

*Emphasizing* the need to ensure that persons facing the death penalty have access to justice without discrimination of any kind, including access to legal counsel, that they are treated with humanity and with respect for their inherent dignity and in compliance with their rights under international human rights law, and to improve conditions in prisons in accordance with international standards, notably the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules),

*Noting with deep concern* that, as shown in recent reports of the Secretary-General, frequently, poor and economically vulnerable persons, foreign nationals, persons exercising their human rights and persons belonging to religious or ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented among those sentenced to the death penalty and the discriminatory application of the death penalty, to women,

*Noting* that transparent reporting and access to information regarding the use of the death penalty and criminal prosecutions can expose discriminatory practices or impact in the imposition and application of the death penalty, and recalling that, particularly in cases of capital punishment, States must guarantee transparency in order to ensure that all persons benefit from due process guarantees,

*Noting also* the negative impact that the imposition of the death penalty has on the rights of children whose parents or parental caregivers face the death penalty, as well as other family members,

*Noting further* the technical cooperation among Member States, as well as the role of relevant United Nations entities and human rights mechanisms, in supporting State efforts to establish moratoriums on the death penalty,

*Bearing in mind* the work of the treaty bodies and special procedure mandate holders that

have addressed human rights issues related to the death penalty within the framework of their respective mandates,

*Welcoming* the considerable movement towards the abolition of the death penalty globally and the fact that many States with different legal systems, traditions, cultures and religious backgrounds are applying a moratorium, including long-standing moratoriums, either in law or in practice, on the use of the death penalty,

*Expressing deep concern* about the continued application of the death penalty,

1 *Reaffirms* the sovereign right of all countries to develop their own legal systems, including determining appropriate legal penalties, in accordance with their international law obligations;

2 *Calls upon* all States to establish a moratorium on executions, with a view to abolishing the death penalty;

3 *Recalls* the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

4 *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 77/222 and the recommendations contained therein;

5 *Also welcomes* the steps taken by some States to reduce the number of offences for which the death penalty may be imposed, as well as steps taken to limit its application, including by commuting death sentences;

6 *Further welcomes* initiatives and political leadership encouraging national discussions and debates on the possibility of moving away from capital punishment through domestic decision-making;

7 *Welcomes* the decisions made by an increasing number of States from all regions, at all levels of government, to

apply a moratorium on executions, followed in many cases by the abolition of the death penalty;

8 *Calls upon* all States:

- (a) To respect international standards that provide safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, in particular the minimum standards, as set out in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/50 of 25 May 1984, as well as to provide the Secretary-General with information in this regard;
- (b) To comply with their obligations under article 36 of the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, particularly the obligation of a receiving State to, without delay, inform a sending State that a national of that State has been arrested or committed to prison or to custody pending trial or is detained in any other manner, if the person concerned so requests; and the obligation of a receiving State to inform the person concerned without delay of their rights under article 36;
- (c) To make available relevant information, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, nationality and race, as applicable, and other applicable criteria, with regard to their use of the death penalty, *inter alia*, the number of persons sentenced to death, the number of persons on death row and the location of their detention, and the number of executions carried out, the number of death sentences reversed or commuted on appeal or in which amnesty or pardon has been granted, and according to which procedure, as well as information on any scheduled execution, which can contribute to possible informed and transparent national and international debates, including on the obligations of States pertaining to the use of the death penalty;
- (d) To ensure that any trial leading to the imposition of the death penalty

complies with internationally recognized fair trial guarantees, such as a fair and public trial and the right to legal assistance, including adequate access to legal counsel at every stage of the proceedings, without discrimination of any kind, including for persons belonging to minorities and foreign nationals, bearing in mind that namely failure to respect fair trial guarantees in proceedings resulting in the imposition of the death penalty could constitute a violation of the right to life;

- (e) To progressively restrict the use of the death penalty and not to impose capital punishment for offences committed by persons below 18 years of age or whose age above 18 years at the time of the commission of the crime cannot be accurately determined, on pregnant women or on persons with mental or intellectual disabilities;
- (f) To reduce the number of offences for which the death penalty may be imposed, including by considering removing the mandatory application of the death penalty;
- (g) To ensure that those facing the death penalty can exercise their right to apply for pardon or commutation of their death sentence by ensuring that clemency procedures are fair and transparent and that prompt information is provided at all stages of the process;
- (h) To ensure that children whose parents or parental caregivers are on death row, the inmates themselves, their families and their legal representatives are provided, in advance, with adequate information about the location of their detention, a pending execution, its date, time and location, to allow a last visit or communication with the convicted person, the return of the body to the family for burial or to inform on where the body is located, unless this is not in the best interests of the child;

- (i) To provide access for persons sentenced to death to information related to the method of execution, in particular the precise procedures to be followed;
- (j) To ensure that the death penalty is not applied on the basis of discriminatory laws, including laws which target individuals for exercising their human rights, or as a result of discriminatory or arbitrary application of the law;
- (k) To improve conditions in detention for those on trial for capital crimes or on death row, by ensuring that all prisoners are treated with humanity and with respect for their inherent dignity, and complying with international standards, notably the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), in particular by evaluating, promoting, protecting and improving their physical and mental health;

9 *Calls upon* States which have abolished the death penalty not to reintroduce it, and encourages them to share their experience in this regard;

10 *Encourages* States which have a moratorium to maintain it and to share their experience in this regard;

11 *Calls upon* States that have not yet done so to consider acceding to or ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;

12 *Urges* States to ensure transparency on the imposition and application of the death penalty;

13 *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution;



14 *Decides* to continue consideration of the matter at its eighty-first session under the item entitled "Promotion and protection of human rights".

53<sup>rd</sup> plenary meeting  
17 December 2024

**EC  
PM**

**TOGETHER  
AGAINST  
~~THE DEATH  
PENALTY~~**

62 bis, avenue Parmentier  
75011 Paris - France  
[ecpm@ecpm.org](mailto:ecpm@ecpm.org)

 [ecpm@ecpm.org](mailto:ecpm@ecpm.org)  [www.ecpm.org](http://www.ecpm.org)

