



THE APPLICATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE WORLD IN 2020

INTERACTIVE MAP

STATUS OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE WORLD ON 10 OCTOBER 2020

- 106** — States are abolitionists for all crimes
- 9** — States are abolitionists for common crimes
- 34** — States apply a moratorium on executions¹
- 49** — States apply the death penalty

The abolition of the death penalty is one of the human rights that has made the most progress in the last 40 years. On 10 October 1981, France became the 35th abolitionist state in the world. That year, two thirds of the countries in the world regularly practised the death penalty. Today, 80% of UN member states no longer execute and almost 60% are abolitionist.

APPLICATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE WORLD

The death penalty is predominantly applied in **Asia**, the **Middle East** and the **United States**.

In 2019, the **5** countries that have executed the most are **China**, **Iran**, **Saudi Arabia**, **Iraq** and **Egypt**.²

Every year, **China executes several thousands of people in the greatest secrecy**. This estimate is higher than that of all other countries in the world combined.

Iran is the **country with the highest per capita execution rate**. According to the annual report of Iran Human rights and ECPM³, at least 280 people were executed in 2019 and more than 5,000 people were held on death row.

Since the beginning of the year, at least **8** states have carried out executions despite the international health crisis: **Bangladesh**, **Botswana**, **Egypt**, **India**, **Iran**, **North Korea**, **Saudi Arabia**, **Somalia** and the **United States**.

MAIN HIGHLIGHTS IN 2020

- On 28 April 2020, **Chad** became the 22nd African country and the 106th abolitionist country for all crimes.
- On 1 July 2020, **Colorado** became the 22nd state of the **United States** to officially abolish the death penalty. On 13 July, the United States resumed executions at the federal level after a 17-year moratorium.
- In July 2020, **Sudan** decided to abolish the death penalty for homosexuality.
- As of 1 October 2020, 11 countries in the world continue to sentence people to death for homosexuality: **Afghanistan**, **Brunei**, **Iran**, **Mauritania**, **Nigeria**, **Qatar**, **Pakistan**, **Saudi Arabia**, **Somalia**, **United Arab Emirates** and **Yemen**.⁴
- On 24 September 2020, **Kazakhstan** signed the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (OP2), the only international treaty providing for the total abolition of the death penalty. OP2 will enter into force once Kazakhstan ratifies it, which is the case for 88 states in the world.

¹ 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

² Amnesty International: Death sentences and executions in 2019 https://amnestyfr.cdn.prismic.io/amnestyfr/c177b265-090b-4134-a4b2-1651beabd709_FEB20-GLO52_ACT_50_1847_2020_DP_report_2019_FR_V2.pdf

³ Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran 2019 <https://ecpm.org/wp-content/uploads/Rapport-iran-2020-FR-110620-Md.pdf>

⁴ ECPM Campaign <https://www.ecpm.org/campagnes-en-cours/peine-de-mort-et-lgbt/>



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AFRICA ON THE PATH TO ABOLITION

	1990	2019
— Abolitionist for all crimes	— 1	— 20
— Abolitionist for common crimes	— 0	— 1
— With a moratorium on executions	— 8	— 23
— Retentionist	— 45	— 11

Most of the 22 states which have abolished the death penalty in law did so after a moratorium on executions which lasted for more than ten years (**Senegal, Congo**, etc.). 10 of them modified their Constitutions (**Mozambique, Côte d'Ivoire**, etc.), while 10 others reformed their Criminal Code (**Senegal, Togo**, etc.). In **Benin**, abolition followed ratification of OP2. ¼ of African countries have ratified this Protocol.

Conversely, not all countries with a moratorium have committed to an active abolitionist process. Most of the 23 states with a moratorium in place have had it for more than 20 years and some, such as **Niger**, even for more than 40 years. **Liberia** is located in a region which is mostly abolitionist but it maintains capital punishment, despite its support for OP2.

Of the 34 countries which have not abolished the death penalty in law, ¼ still apply mandatory death penalty. 4 states, including **Nigeria**, still sentence people to death for homosexuality and apostasy. Approximately, two-thirds of non-abolitionist states retain capital punishment for acts of terrorism.

A number of positive steps may give the hope that abolition is imminent in many countries such as **Central African Republic**, the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, **Equatorial Guinea**, **Kenya** and **Zimbabwe**.

APPLICATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY WITHIN INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

- Of the 54 member states of the **Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)**,
— 94% are de jure abolitionist or have a moratorium in place.
- Of the 53 member states of the **Commonwealth**,
— 60% are abolitionist in law or have a moratorium in place.
- Of the 9 member states of the **Community of Portuguese Language Countries**,
— 77% are abolitionist in law.
- Of the 54 member states of the **Organisation for Islamic Cooperation**,
— 61% are de jure abolitionist or have a moratorium in place.
- Of the 22 member states of the **Arab League**,
— 37% are abolitionist in law or have a moratorium in place.

