



**Response to the Call for inputs for the Secretary-General’s report on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty:
Legal and policy changes, developments regarding moratoriums, and the death penalty for drug-related offenses**

Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights

a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1996

Humans Remain

ACAT Liberia

The Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty

Death Penalty Focus

in Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council since 2017

Kurdistan without Genocide

and

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty

for the 81st Session of the UN General Assembly
September 2026

Submitted 10 April 2026

The Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law since its founding in 1983. The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publication. The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States. The Advocates is committed to ensuring human rights protection for women around the world. The Advocates has published more than 25 reports on violence against women as a human rights issue, provided consultation and commentary of draft laws on domestic violence, and trained lawyers, police, prosecutors, judges, and other law enforcement personnel to effectively implement new and existing laws on domestic violence. In 1991, The Advocates adopted a formal commitment to oppose the death penalty worldwide and organized a death penalty project to provide pro bono assistance on post-conviction appeals, as well as education and advocacy to end capital punishment. The Advocates currently holds a seat on the Steering Committee of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty.

Humans Remain stands as an advocacy effort dedicated to supporting Death Row prisoners in Mississippi and amplifying their voices. Through educating, storytelling and campaigning we work towards the worldwide abolition of the death penalty seeking justice that is humane, equitable and compassionate.

Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT Liberia) is a national non-governmental organization founded in May 2004. It is a national human rights organization that works to promote, defend and protect human rights by advocating for reform in the criminal justice

system (police, court and correction), the abolition of the death penalty, abolition of torture and the rehabilitation of its victims. ACAT Liberia is a member of the International Federation of ACATs (FIACAT) based in France. FIACAT has member associations in 30 countries on 4 continents around the globe. ACAT Liberia is also a member of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty.

The Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty (TAEDP) is the first coalition in Taiwan dedicated to abolishing the death penalty and promoting reform of the criminal justice system. Established in 2003, it brings together abolitionist groups, NGOs, and research institutes. TAEDP works on individual capital cases, monitors trial procedures to safeguard fair trial rights, and campaigns to prevent wrongful executions. The organization also provides training and seminars for criminal defense lawyers. Beyond capital punishment, TAEDP advocates for victims' rights and stronger support systems for those affected by serious crimes. It engages the public through forums, seminars, and educational programs developed in collaboration with teachers.

Death Penalty Focus is committed to the abolition of the death penalty through public education, grassroots organizing, political advocacy, media outreach, and domestic and international coalition-building since 1988. Over the past 38 years, DPF has continued to raise awareness of how broken the death penalty system is.

Kurdistan without Genocide (KWG) is a non-governmental and non-profit organization working for human rights and against the genocide in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. KWG is working to achieve the goals of: getting international recognition for the crimes perpetrated against the Kurdish people; nationalization of events in Kurdistan to create a human-friendly awareness in the community in order to prevent recurrences; prosecution of criminals in domestic and international courts, including people responsible for planning and implementing genocide and ethnic cleansing and their accomplices; abolition of the death penalty in Kurdistan, Iraq, and the Middle East; working for a country without weapons and violence.

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty is a membership-based global network committed to strengthening the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Established in 2002, its ultimate objective is to obtain the universal abolition of the death penalty. To achieve its goal, the World Coalition advocates for a definitive end to death sentences and executions in those countries where the death penalty is in force. In some countries, it is seeking to obtain a reduction in the use of capital punishment as a first step towards abolition.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report responds to a call for inputs to assist the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in preparing the Secretary-General’s report on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, focusing on legal and policy changes, developments regarding moratoriums, changes to the scope or application of the death penalty, and the death penalty for drug-related offenses. The report incorporates responses to an April 2026 survey of members of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, focusing on developments since 17 December 2024. Recent Coalition responses to other calls for input contain additional responsive information.¹

¹ See, e.g., The Advocates for Human Rights et al., *Response to the Call for Inputs for the Secretary-General’s report on the question of the death penalty: The rights of persons under 18 years of age at the time of the offense who face the death penalty*, 13 March 2026, ¶ 3 (child offenders in Iraq are subject to coerced confessions and have limited access to legal representation), ¶ 8 (2025 study of Pakistan’s implementation of its Juvenile Justice System Act shows that authorities are not following the law’s age-determination procedures), <https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/Res/UNSG%20Call%20for%20Input%20DP%20children%20sentenced%20to%20death.pdf>; The Advocates for Human Rights et al., *Response to the Call for Inputs for the Secretary-General’s report on the question of the death penalty: People with mental or intellectual disabilities sentenced to death*, 13 March 2026, ¶ 15 (describing the prohibition in the USA against executing people with intellectual disability as on “precarious footing” with a Supreme Court decision to be issued by July 2026), ¶ 21 (reporting that the US state of Georgia had amended its law to provide for pretrial proceedings in capital cases involving defendants with intellectual disability and to replace the defendant’s “beyond a reasonable doubt” evidentiary burden with a “preponderance of the evidence” standard), <https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/Res/UNSG%20Call%20for%20Input%20DP%20disabilities.pdf>; The Advocates for Human Rights et al., *Response to the Call for Inputs for the Secretary-General’s report on the question of the death penalty: General developments since 1 July 2024*, 13 March 2026, ¶ 2 (Supreme Court of India in August 2025 held that a sentencing hearing in a capital case is a procedural safeguard and part of the right to a fair trial); ¶ 3 (in 2026, revisions to Indonesia’s Criminal Code took effect that establish the death penalty as an alternative punishment and that give people on death row the opportunity to seek commutation after 10 years); ¶ 6 (in 2025, a high court in Kenya issued a significant ruling that the mandatory death penalty for robbery is unconstitutional); ¶ 8 (in December 2024, authorities in the Maldives declared that they were resuming executions, had constructed execution facilities, and were training executioners, and in December 2025 the Maldives adopted a law authorizing the death penalty for drug-related offenses); ¶ 9 (2026 marks Nigeria’s 10th year without executions, and in 2025 the Senate dropped a death penalty provision from proposed drug law amendments); ¶ 10 (in 2025 Nigeria’s National Human Rights Commission warns of a gradual return to executions and the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice issued a writ compelling Nigeria to comply with a judgment finding its blasphemy laws, including capital penalties, violate the African Charter); ¶ 16 (providing data about changes to death penalty practices in the USA in 2025), <https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/Res/UNSG%20Call%20for%20Input%20DP%20general.pdf>; The Advocates for Human Rights et al., *Response to the Call for Inputs for the Secretary-General’s report on the question of the death penalty: Women and the gender dimension of the death penalty*, 13 March 2026, ¶ 2 (in 2025, courts in India sentenced 10 women to death, the highest number since 2016, and 24 women were on death row at the end of 2025), ¶ 3 (a 2026 report describes the experiences of six women on Indonesia’s death row), ¶ 7 (summarizing 2025 interviews with two women on death row in Japan), ¶ 8 (22 women are on death row in Jordan as of the end of 2025), ¶ 12 (in 2025, the Supreme Court of the Maldives dismissed a woman’s “battered woman syndrome” plea to challenge her conviction and potential death sentence for murdering her husband), ¶ 13 (reporting on a 2025 study highlighting the unique challenges that women sentenced to death in Nigeria face), ¶ 14 (providing details about women sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia since 2024 and noting that drug offences are the overwhelming majority of cases involving foreign women), ¶ 15 (authorities in Puntland, Somalia, executed a woman in February 2026 just three months after her conviction), ¶ 17 (reporting on the death penalty for drug offenses having a disproportionate effect on women in Thailand), <https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/Res/UNSG%20Call%20for%20Input%20DP%20women%20and%20gender.pdf>.

Legal and policy changes

2. Kurdistan without Genocide reports that Iraq continues to carry out the death penalty, but authorities in Kurdistan have suspended the use of the death penalty.
3. ACAT Liberia, a member of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and the International Federation of Actions by Christians Against Torture (FIACAT), reports significant policy momentum toward abolition in Liberia. Lawmakers have prepared a revised abolition bill and civil society has undertaken national advocacy initiatives with strong international support. Liberia is an abolitionist state in practice with a longstanding *de facto* moratorium and no recent death sentences.
4. A member of the World Coalition based in Pakistan reports that in 2025, Pakistan took limited legislative steps to narrow the scope of the death penalty. The Criminal Laws (Amendment) act, 2025 removed the death penalty as a possible punishment for certain non-lethal offences under the Penal Code, including publicly stripping a woman (Section 354-A) and harbouring a hijacker (Section 402-C). Pakistan retains the death penalty for a broad range of offenses, including murder, terrorism-related crimes, blasphemy, and certain sexual offenses. Pakistan's death row is one of the world's largest, with over 3,000 people estimated to be under sentence of death. Since December 2024, Pakistan has not introduced any other restrictions on categories of persons who may be sentenced to death, nor has the country made any progress in moving toward a formal moratorium on executions. The Coalition member concludes that these recent development "indicate a gradual and selective narrowing of capital offences rather than a systemic reform of Pakistan's death penalty framework."
5. The Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty (TAEDP) reports that Taiwan faces a complex situation, due in part to the Constitutional Court's 2024 judgment declaring that the death penalty for homicide-related offenses is constitutional if authorities comply with the strictest procedural requirements. In early 2025, pursuant to that judgment, many people on death row have filed for extraordinary appeals, contending that their proceedings did not meet the highest due process standards. The Prosecutor General, however, has remained silent on the majority of requests, filing extraordinary appeals for only four people.
6. Also subsequent to the 2024 judgment, the executive branch has significantly relaxed the requirements for execution, increasing the risk of arbitrary execution. The Justice Ministry in early 2025 hastily amended execution regulations restricting the circumstances in which a person may obtain a stay of execution. Under these regulations, a person may obtain a stay only if the Prosecutor General formally files an extraordinary appeal with the court, or if the court specifically issues a provisional stay order pursuant to a filing for retrial or constitutional litigation. Under the prior regulations, people could obtain a stay automatically upon filing an extraordinary appeal, a petition for retrial, or constitutional litigation.
7. The Zambia-based Prisoners' Future Foundation (PFF) reports that on 19 December 2024, Zambia ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

Developments regarding moratoriums

8. ACAT Liberia reports no change in the status of Liberia's *de facto* moratorium, which has been in place since the last execution in 2000.

9. The Coalition member in Pakistan reports that the country has not seen any developments—whether positive or negative—with respect to a moratorium on executions. The absence of recorded executions in 2023, 2024, and 2025 marks “a de facto pause in executions rather than a declared policy or legal moratorium,” and it “has not been accompanied by any formal government commitment to suspend executions.” Moreover, Pakistan has not supported international calls for a moratorium. The organization observes that “executions may legally resume at any time, and a significant death row population (numbering in the thousands) remains at risk.” The member highlighted that the de facto pause in executions “may nonetheless be viewed as an important opportunity for the state to undertake a comprehensive review of its criminal justice and capital punishment framework,” with the potential to “leverag[e] [the period] to identify and address systemic deficiencies, including fair trial gaps, sentencing inconsistencies and challenges faced by vulnerable groups on death row.” The organization emphasizes the need for “proactive engagement” and cautions that “the continued pause risks prolonging legal uncertainty and psychological distress for individuals on death row without delivering corresponding institutional reform.”
10. TAEDP reports that Taiwan resumed executions on 16 January 2025 after a nearly five-year hiatus. The Justice Ministry’s “Research Task Force on the Gradual Abolition of the Death Penalty,” launched in 2017, has met only seven times and has produced no substantive results. The first iteration of the government’s high-level National Human Rights Action Plan (2022-2024) planned research on alternative punishments and public opinion surveys, but authorities took no further substantive measures to promote social dialogue or advance abolition. The draft version of the next NHRAP does not retain the previous version’s chapter on “Abolition of the Death Penalty and the Right to Life” and fails to propose any continued policies for abolition.
11. Humans Remain, a member of the World Coalition based in the United Kingdom but focusing on death penalty practices in the state of Mississippi in the USA reports that Mississippi has not observed a moratorium, having executed two men in 2025.
12. PFF reports that although Zambia abolished the death penalty in 2022 and authorities commuted the vast majority of death sentences, ten people remain under sentence of death and their “cases are still active before courts of appeal.”

Changes to the scope or application of the death penalty

13. Kurdistan without Genocide reports that Iraq has not made any changes to the scope or application of the death penalty during the reporting period.
14. ACAT Liberia reports no changes to the scope or application of the death penalty in Liberia. Rescue Alternatives Liberia adds that the Liberian Government has resubmitted a bill to abolish the death penalty to the Senate.
15. The Coalition member in Pakistan reports “limited but noteworthy changes in the scope of the death penalty, reflecting a gradual and selective narrowing of its application, though not systemic reform.” In 2025, lawmakers removed the death penalty as a possible punishment for publicly stripping a woman (Section 354-A of the Pakistan Penal Code) and for harbouring a hijacker (Section 402-C of the Penal Code).² Through these amendments, Pakistan is

² Senate of Pakistan, Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2025, https://senate.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1764749391_623.pdf.

incrementally aligning its domestic laws with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.³ Yet Pakistan’s laws continue to authorize the death penalty for “a wide array of crimes, including murder, terrorism-related offences, blasphemy, and certain sexual offences.” The organization reports that authorities have not implemented any additional restrictions against sentencing people to death or executing people belonging to specific groups, such as people with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities.

16. TAEDP reports that in Taiwan, the Constitutional Court’s 2024 judgment limited the death penalty to the “most serious crimes” involving offenses in which the accused person directly caused the victim’s death, suggesting that non-homicide offenses should not be death-eligible. Nonetheless, in July 2025 the Legislative Yuan adopted amendments to the criminal law adding new capital offenses, including Article 272-1 (killing a person under the age of seven through abuse) and Article 286 (abuse of a person under the age of seven resulting in death). These amendments mark the first time since Taiwan’s democratization that lawmakers have introduced new capital offenses.
17. PFF reports that as of 2023, Zambian courts do not hand down death sentences. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment.

Death penalty for drug-related offenses

18. ACAT Liberia reports that in 2024, lawmakers in Liberia considered a proposal to allow the death penalty for major drug traffickers, but the proposal did not become law and no Liberian court has issued a death sentence since 2021.
19. The Coalition member in Pakistan reports that during the reporting period, there was no new official data about the use of the death penalty for drug-related offenses, “and existing information remains limited and fragmented.” The organization concludes that “[o]verall, the lack of transparency and systematic reporting remains a key barrier to evaluating the scope and application of the death penalty for drug-related offences in Pakistan.”
20. TAEDP reports that while Taiwan’s laws allow for the death penalty for drug-related offenses, there are currently no people sentenced to death or on death row for such crimes.

³ United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 6(2), 1966, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>.