



**Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review:
The Death Penalty**

Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights,
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1996

and

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty

**for the 53rd Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
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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. Established 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 publications. The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States. 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. In preparing this report, The Advocates received the invaluable support of an attorney-at-law based in Trinidad and Tobago with extensive expertise in death penalty issues in the Greater Caribbean region.

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 addresses Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' compliance with its human rights obligations with regard to the death penalty and related issues. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has been observing a de facto moratorium on executions since 1995. One person remains on death row.¹ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has failed to implement several recommendations it supported during its third-cycle Universal Periodic Review, including relating to detention conditions and data collection and dissemination relating to the prison system.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Acceptance of international norms

Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented

2. During its third-cycle Universal Periodic Review, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines noted several recommendations calling for ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.² Authorities have made no progress toward ratification since 2021.

Death penalty

Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented

3. In the third-cycle UPR, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines noted all ten recommendations it received relating to the death penalty.³
4. The Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines explicitly contemplates that the government may carry out executions, while simultaneously prohibiting the deprivation of the right to life except in execution of a lawful court sentence.⁴ Laws authorize the death penalty for murder and treason.⁵
5. A court convicted Patrick Lovelace of murder and sentenced him to death in 2004. A review court quashed his original conviction and sentence but a court retried him in 2009 and again sentenced him to death in 2010.⁶ The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court will review his case in May 2026.⁷ In *Pratt and Morgan v. The Attorney General of Jamaica (Pratt and Morgan)*, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council⁸ held that any delay of more than five years between sentencing and execution was *prima facie* evidence that carrying out the sentence would constitute inhuman or degrading punishment,⁹ but authorities have not commuted Mr. Lovelace's sentence.
6. At the third-cycle UPR in November 2021, the delegation from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines acknowledged that the country had observed a de facto moratorium on executions since 1995, but stated that authorities did not intend to remove the death penalty from the Criminal Code.¹⁰ In May 2022, the Prime Minister asserted without evidence that the absence of executions "probably induced" some people to carry out violent crimes and stated that authorities "will increasingly have to revisit" the issue of resuming executions.¹¹

Media outlets report that members of the public periodically express support for resumption of executions after high-profile murders, including as recently as 2023.¹²

7. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has consistently voted against the UN General Assembly resolution calling for a global moratorium on the death penalty, including most recently in 2024.¹³
8. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines held general elections in November 2025 and the opposition New Democratic Party (NDP) won 14 of 15 constituencies, ousting a prime minister who had served since 2001.¹⁴ In 2023, NDP leader Godwin Friday publicly expressed his opposition to the death penalty, while recognizing that the NDP had not campaigned for abolition.¹⁵ It is unclear whether now-Prime Minister Friday will push for reforms to the criminal legal system, including abolition of the death penalty.

Conditions of detention

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Partially Implemented

9. In the third-cycle UPR, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supported several recommendations relating to detention conditions,¹⁶ including recommendations to address violence and sexual violence in detention facilities,¹⁷ to align detention conditions with the Nelson Mandela Rules,¹⁸ and to improve detention conditions.¹⁹
10. Authorities detain people who are convicted of crimes when between the ages of 16 and 21 years in the adult prison population.²⁰ This practice is reportedly due to limited prison capacity. At the third-cycle review in November 2021, the government delegation reported that it had made substantial progress in reforming juvenile justice, including by transforming the Liberty Lodge Boys' Training Centre to include a wing to house boys in conflict with the law and ensuring that those boys could participate in a variety of technical and vocational programs.²¹ The delegation acknowledged, however, that authorities needed to take further steps to accommodate girls in conflict with the law, and stated that, with the help of the international community, it would expedite that process over the coming years.²² Notwithstanding these assurances, the coauthors have not identified evidence that authorities have ceased detaining minors with the adult population.
11. During the third-cycle review in November 2021, the government delegation reported progress on prison conditions, stating that authorities had constructed new detention facilities and rehabilitated existing ones to bring them into compliance with the Nelson Mandela Rules.²³ The delegation acknowledged, however, that Her Majesty's Prison in Kingstown did not fully comply with the Rules due to its infrastructure, and stated that authorities would welcome assistance from the international community in that regard.
12. Reports continue to document inadequate detention conditions, including chronic understaffing, severe overcrowding (often at 140–160 percent design capacity), persistent contraband flows, and no dedicated space to separate children from adults. Multiple sources describe cells as “deplorable, foul-smelling and unsafe.”²⁴
13. Pretrial detention practices exacerbate overcrowding. People in conflict with the law (including people aged 16–21) continue to face prolonged pretrial detention due to the absence of a legal aid system. The State provides legal representation only for people

charged with capital offences. Even though Court of Appeal guidelines require courts to hold a preliminary hearing within nine months of arrest, many people remain in custody for more than a year before their first court appearance.²⁵

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

14. This stakeholder report suggests the following recommendations for the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

- Abolish the death penalty and replace it with a sentence that is fair, proportionate, and aligned with international human rights standards.
- In the interim:
 - Impose an immediate official moratorium on executions;
 - Collaborate with civil society organizations in the Caribbean to conduct a comprehensive public awareness-raising campaign to educate the public and elected officials about international human rights standards as they pertain to the death penalty and about alternatives to the death penalty;
 - Codify the Privy Council’s decision in *Pratt and Morgan*, ensuring automatic commutation of the death sentence of any person held on death row for more than five years;
 - Amend the Criminal Code to restrict the use of the death penalty to those crimes in which the defendant committed an intentional killing; and
 - On at least an annual basis, publish data on the number of people charged with capital crimes, the number of death sentences imposed, and the number of people on death row, disaggregated by sex/gender, date of arrest, crime of conviction, date of conviction, relationship to any codefendants or victims, current location, and status of any appeals or requests for mercy.
- Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- Vote in favor of the 2026 and 2028 UN General Assembly resolutions calling for a global moratorium on the use of the death penalty.
- Increase the resources and personnel available to the criminal legal system so that there are sufficient judges, lawyers, and paralegals to minimize the backlog and reduce the use of pretrial detention and to reduce the length of pretrial detention.
- Dedicate additional resources to aligning detention conditions with the Nelson Mandela Rules, particularly regarding hygiene and safety.
- Ensure that detention conditions comply with the Nelson Mandela Rules, particularly Rule 11(d), which states that “[y]oung prisoners shall be kept separate from adults.”

¹ Amnesty International, *Death sentences and executions in 2024*, (London: Amnesty International, Apr. 2025), 20, available online at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/8976/2025/en/>.

² Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review — Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/10 (6 January 2022), recommendations 81.1 (Iceland), 81.2 (Namibia), 81.3 (Nepal and Argentina), 81.4 (Portugal and Finland), 81.5 (Australia), and 81.6 (France); Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review — Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/10 (6 January 2022), recommendations 81.74

(Canada), 81.75 (Ireland), 81.76 (Montenegro), 81.77 (Costa Rica), 81.78 (Ireland), 81.79 (Italy), 81.80 (Mexico), 81.81 (Spain), 81.82 (Fiji), and 81.83 (Fiji).

³ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review — Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/10 (6 January 2022), recommendations 81.74–81.83.

⁴ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Const. Ch. 1, Sec. 2, available at <https://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Vincent/stvincent79.html>

⁵ Hands off Cain, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, available at <http://www.handsoffcain.info/bancadati/south-america/st-vincent-and-the-grenadines-60000236>.

⁶ Death Penalty Project, *Legal Provision Restricting the Right to Appeal in Death Penalty Cases Struck Down as Denial of Due Process*, 15 June 2017, <https://deathpenaltyproject.org/legal-provision-restricting-the-right-to-appeal-in-death-penalty-cases-struck-down-as-denial-of-due-process/>.

⁷ Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, *In the Court of Appeal of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines Preliminary Cause List [Monday 4th to Friday 8th May 2026]*, 10 Feb. 2026, <https://www.eccourts.org/cause-list-st-vincent-and-the-grenadines-4th-to-8th-may-2026> (referencing Case No. SVGHCRAP2009/0017).

⁸ This body sometimes hears legal questions from former British colonies.

⁹ The Death Penalty Project, *Earl Pratt and Ivan Morgan*, available online at: <https://www.deathpenaltyproject.org/story/earl-pratt-and-ivan-morgan/> (last visited March 17, 2026).

¹⁰ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review — Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/10 (6 January 2022), para. 42

¹¹ Ernesto Cooke, *St Vincent May Revisit The ‘Death Penalty,’* St. Vincent Times, 23 May 2022, <https://www.stvincenttimes.com/st-vincent-may-revisit-the-death-penalty/>.

¹² Ernesto Cooke, *St. Vincent’s gruesome murders and the call for the ‘death penalty,’* St. Vincent Times, 5 Mar. 2023, <https://www.stvincenttimes.com/st-vincents-gruesome-murders-and-the-call-for-the-death-penalty/>.

¹³ A/RES/73/175 “Moratorium on the use of the death penalty” (17 Dec 2018); A/RES/74/194 “Moratorium on the use of the death penalty” (16 Dec 2019); A/RES/76/183 “Moratorium on the use of the death penalty” (18 Dec 2021); A/RES/78/205 “Moratorium on the use of the death penalty” (18 Dec 2023).

¹⁴ *Opposition NDP party claims victory in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Al Jazeera, 28 Nov. 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/11/28/opposition-ndp-party-claims-victory-in-saint-vincent-and-the-grenadines>.

¹⁵ *Opposition Leader opposed to death penalty despite party’s position*, iWitness News, 17 Feb. 2023, <https://www.iwsvg.com/2023/02/17/opposition-leader-opposed-to-death-penalty-despite-partys-position/>.

¹⁶ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines — Addendum, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/10/Add.1 (16 March 2022).

¹⁷ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review — Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/10 (6 January 2022), recommendation 81.84 (Armenia) (“Continue human rights-centred reforms of the law enforcement system, including the police.”).

¹⁸ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review — Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/10 (6 January 2022), recommendation 81.85 (Denmark) (“Bring its prison and detention conditions fully into line with international human rights norms and standards, including the Nelson Mandela Rules.”).

¹⁹ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review — Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/10 (6 January 2022), recommendation 81.86 (France) (“Take the necessary measures to improve the conditions of detention for prisoners.”).

²⁰ Confidential Source, 2023, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights.

²¹ Searchlight (Kingstown), “Liberty Lodge Boys’ Wing Operational, Girls’ Unit Still Pending,” 15 Jan 2024.

²² Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review — Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/10 (6 January 2022).

²³ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review — Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, UN Doc. A/HRC/49/10 (6 January 2022), ¶ 64.

²⁴ Confidential Source, 2023, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights; Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2024: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*; Searchlight; iWitness News.

²⁵ Confidential Source, 2023, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights.