



UN Human Rights Council
Thirtieth Session
14 September – 2 October 2015

Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Presentation of the thematic reports of the Secretary-General and High Commissioner for Human Rights followed by general debate

Mr. President

Amnesty International welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the death penalty to this session of the Human Rights Council.¹

The global trend towards abolition of the death penalty in 2015 has been very encouraging. As of August 2015, 101 countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes. In January, Madagascar abolished the death penalty for all crimes; Fiji followed suit in February and Suriname in March. In addition, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mongolia and South Korea are currently considering draft bills to abolish the death penalty.

Despite the encouraging global trend towards abolition, we are concerned that some countries have resumed executions and have applied the death penalty at an alarming rate.

In the last 12 months Chad, Indonesia, Jordan, and Pakistan have resumed executions in response to crime even though there is no convincing evidence that the death penalty is a particular deterrent to crime, or that it is more effective in reducing crime than terms of imprisonment.

Iran has executed at least 720 individuals this year. Many of these executions have not been officially acknowledged and the majority have been for crimes that do not meet the threshold of most serious crimes under international law, such as drug-related offences, for which there have been at least 465 executions.

In Saudi Arabia Amnesty International has recorded many more executions so far this year (at least 134) than in the whole of 2014 (at least 90). Almost half of these 2015 executions were for drug-related offences and 62 were of foreign nationals. We have submitted a written statement to this

¹ UN document: A/HRC/30/18, of 16 July 2015

Council's session outlining our concerns with regard to the application of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia ("Saudi Arabia: Rampant executions in a justice system lacking basic safeguards").²

Since Pakistan lifted a moratorium on executions in December 2014, at least 239 persons have been executed, including at least four who claimed to be under 18 at the time of offence. Around 8,000 prisoners remain on Pakistan's death row following trials that often fall well below international standards. Amongst those at risk of execution are prisoners with mental disabilities.

Amnesty International has submitted a written statement providing an overview of our concerns with regard to the application of the death penalty for drug-related offences.³

Amnesty International urges all retentionist states to establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty, as called for by five resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly resolutions, including most recently 69/186 of 18 December 2014. Pending abolition, they must respect fully international standards that provide safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty.

² Saudi Arabia: Rampant executions in a justice system lacking basic safeguards
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/2348/2015/en/>

³ The application of the death penalty for drug-related offences and its serious impact on the enjoyment of human rights
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/2437/2015/en/>