

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

MEDIA BRIEFING

AI index: ACT 50/005/2012

EMBARGO: Tuesday 27 March 2012, 00:01 GMT

DEATH PENALTY 2011: FACTS AND FIGURES

GLOBAL FIGURES

At least **676 people** were **executed** in **20 countries** in 2011.

Most executions took place in **China, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, USA and Yemen**.

China executed more people than the rest of the world put together – the true extent of the use of the death penalty in China is unknown as data is a state secret.

In the Middle East, the number of confirmed **executions increased** by almost 50 per cent.

149 more people were known to be executed in 2011 than in 2010 – due to a steep rise of executions in Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

During 2011, **only 20 out of 198 countries carried out executions** – down by more than a third from a decade ago (31 countries executed in 2002).

140 countries worldwide, more than two thirds, are **abolitionist** in law or practice.

Commutations or **pardons** of death sentences were recorded in 33 countries in 2011, up from 19 in 2010.

At least **18,750 people** were on **death row** at the end of 2011.

The death penalty was used to punish **adultery** and **sodomy** in Iran, religious offences such as **apostasy** in Iran, **blasphemy** in Pakistan, as well as **“sorcery”** in Saudi Arabia, **trafficking of human bones** in the Republic of Congo and **drug-related offences** in **over ten countries**.

At least three people were executed in Iran for crimes that were committed when they were **under 18 years of age**, in violation of international law.

In the majority of countries where people were sentenced to death or executed, the proceedings did not meet international **fair trial** standards. In some countries this included the **extraction of ‘confessions’ through torture** or other duress, for example in Belarus, China, Iran, Iraq, North Korea and Saudi Arabia.

Foreign nationals were disproportionately affected by the use of the death penalty in countries including in Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Thailand

In Belarus and Viet Nam **prisoners were not informed of their forthcoming execution**, nor were their families or lawyers.

Public executions were known to have been carried out in Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Somalia.

Parliaments in **Benin** and **Mongolia** adopted legislation to ratify the key UN treaty that aims to abolish the death penalty.

AFRICA

In sub-Saharan Africa, **Somalia**, **South Sudan** and **Sudan** and carried out executions during 2011.

Sierra Leone declared, and **Nigeria** confirmed, official moratoriums on executions.

AMERICAS

The **USA** was the only country in the Americas to have carried out executions in 2011. Executions in the **USA** dropped to 43 in 2011, from 46 in 2010, and 71 in 2002.

78 new **death sentences** were imposed in the USA in 2011. This figure represents a marked decline in the use of the death penalty, compared with the average of 280 death sentences per year in the 1980s and 1990s.

140 people sentenced to death in the USA have been **exonerated** since 1973.

In the USA, **Illinois** became the 16th state to abolish the death penalty and a moratorium was announced in the state of **Oregon**.

With the exception of in at least six new death sentences in total in Guyana, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, South America and the Caribbean was a **death penalty-free area** in 2011.

ASIA-PACIFIC

With the exception of five new death sentences in **Papua New Guinea**, the Pacific region remained a death penalty-free area in 2011.

No executions were recorded in **Japan** – for the first time in 19 years – and **Singapore** in 2011.

In **China**, authorities eliminated the death penalty for 13 crimes, mainly ‘white collar crimes’, but these amendments also added the death penalty for at least two new capital crimes.

In **Taiwan**, the government removed the death penalty in the military code for a series of crimes including kidnapping, gunrunning, and counterfeiting of banknotes.

EUROPE

Belarus was the only country in Europe and the former Soviet Union to have carried out executions in 2011.

Latvia undertook all relevant steps to abolish the death penalty for all crimes – making it the 97th country worldwide to do so as of 1 January 2012.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Four countries – **Iraq**, **Iran**, **Saudi Arabia** and **Yemen** – accounted for 99 per cent of all recorded executions in the Middle East and North Africa.

In **Iran**, Amnesty received credible reports of a large number of unconfirmed or even secret executions which would almost double the number of executions officially acknowledged.

ENDS

For more information on the death penalty in 2011 please contact the Amnesty International Press Office:

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