

ACTIVISTS TOOLKIT

TURNING THE TIDE IN THE CARIBBEAN

TOWARDS AN END TO
THE DEATH PENALTY

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 3 million supporters, members and activists in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and public donations.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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INTRODUCTION

“The death penalty is an abomination. A denial of human dignity... I try to be a voice for the voiceless. I don't think I'm a special person, I just believe that my community doesn't only mean the people who live on my street... And when someone is killed in China or Uganda or Nigeria or Georgia or Texas, it kills a little of us.”

Martina Correia, whose brother Troy Davis was put to death in Georgia, USA, in September 2011. Martina Correia was a determined and fearless campaigner against the death penalty right up to her own death in December 2011.

This toolkit is for activists working towards the abolition of the death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean. Drawing on many years of Amnesty International's campaigning against the death penalty around the world, it provides practical tips and suggestions for advocacy and campaigning. It sets out some of the key arguments and relevant international human rights standards and provides information about resources that activists can draw on to strengthen and broaden the campaign against the death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean.

This toolkit should be used in conjunction with Amnesty International's report, *Death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean – a human rights issue* (Index: AMR 05/001/2012).

The campaign against the death penalty is truly global and includes people and organizations from every region and many diverse cultures and societies. Here are some of the most-well known international organizations involved in the campaign:

Amnesty International

www.amnesty.org/deathpenalty

World Coalition Against the Death Penalty

www.worldcoalition.org

Community of Sant'Egidio

www.santegidio.org/

Death Penalty Project

www.deathpenaltyproject.org/

International Federation of Human Rights

www.fidh.org/-english-

International Federation of Christian Associations Against Torture

www.fiacat.org/

Penal Reform International

www.penalreform.org/

Prison Fellowship International

www.pfi.org/

Reprieve

www.reprieve.org.uk/

Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights

www.mvfhr.org



FILMS

Raising awareness of the reality of the death penalty and engaging in a debate about the need for abolition are key. There are many resources for you to draw on. As a start, here are some of the best-known films on the issue which may help you to start the discussion in schools, colleges and community, religious or other groups.

12 Angry Men, 1957, Sidney Lumet
A Letter From Death Row, 1998, Marvin Baker and Bret Michaels
Beyond a Reasonable Doubt, 1956, Fritz Lang
The Chamber, 1996, James Foley
The Conspirator, Robert Redford, 2010
Dancer in the Dark, 2000, Lars von Trier
Daniel, 1983, Sidney Lumet
Dead Man Walking, 1995, Tim Robbins
The Executioner's Song, 1983, Lawrence Schiller
The Green Mile, 1999, Frank Darabont
I Want to Live!, 1958, Robert Wise
In Cold Blood, 1967, Richard Brooks
Into the Abyss, 2011, Werner Hertog
Koshikei (Death by hanging), 1968, Nagisa Oshima
Krótki film o zabijaniu (A Short Film About Killing), 1988, Krzysztof Kieślowski
Last Dance, 1996, Bruce Beresford
Last Light, 1993, Kiefer Sutherland
La Veuve de Saint-Pierre, 2000, Patrice Leconte
Let Him Have It, 1991, Peter Medak
The Life of David Gayle, 2003, Alan Parker
Monster, 2003, Patty Jenkins
Monster's Ball, 2001, Marc Forster
My Cousin Vinny, 1992, Jonathan Lynn
Night Train, 2007, Diao Yi Nan
Nous sommes tous des assassins (We are all Murderers), 1952, André Cayattes
Perfume, the Story of a Murderer, 2006, Tom Tykwer
Pierpoint, 2005, Adrian Shergold
True Crime, 1999, Clint Eastwood

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty worldwide in all cases without exception, as a violation of one of the most fundamental of human rights – the right to life.

The organization started its global campaign to end the death penalty in 1977, and every year issues a report which analyzes key developments in the worldwide application of the death penalty.

The latest report, ***Death sentences and executions in 2011***, can be found at www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ACT50/001/2012/en.

For further information on Amnesty International's work against the death penalty please visit www.amnesty.org/en/death-penalty



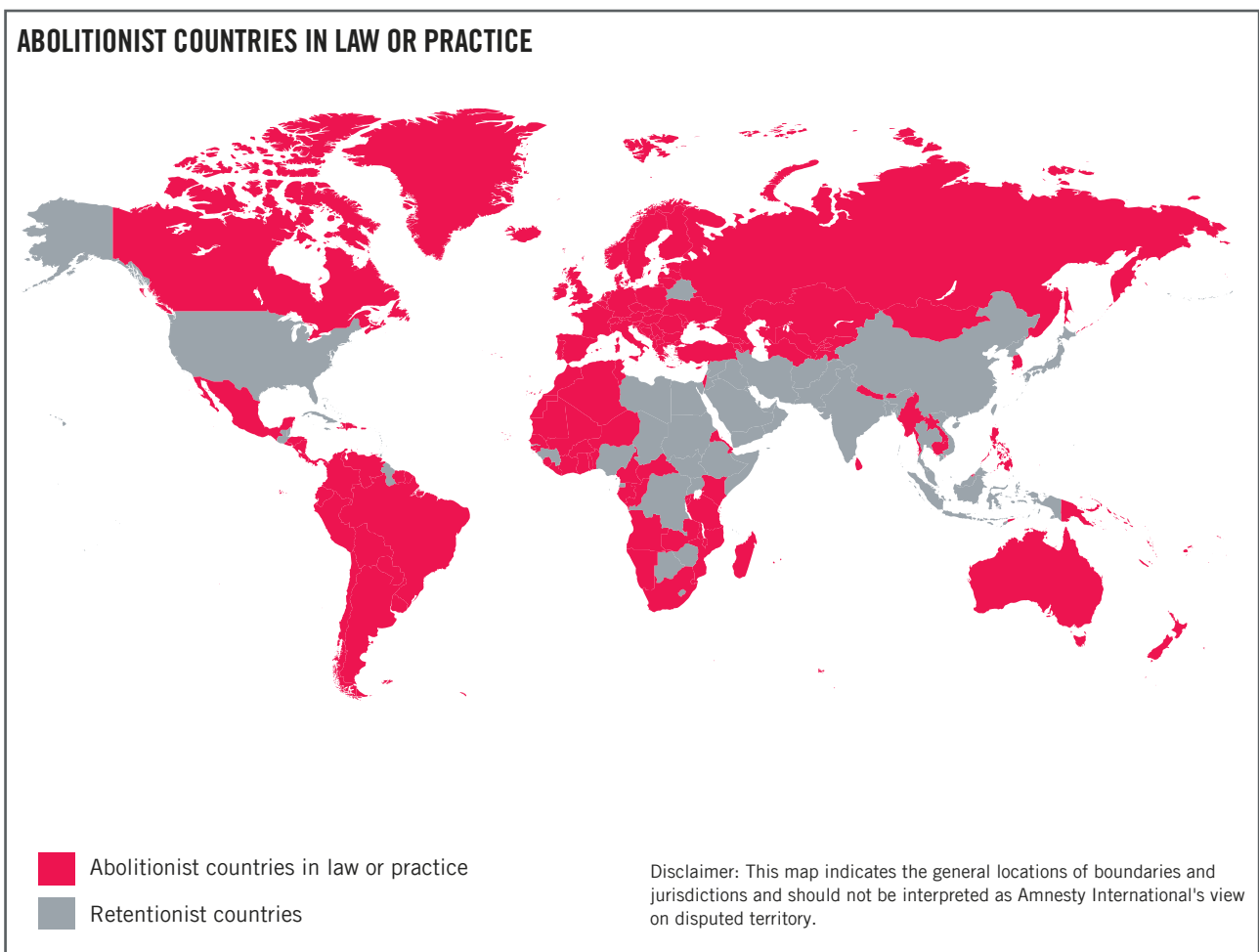
Anti-death penalty activists place candles outside Changi prison hours before 25-year-old Nguyen Tuong Van, an Australian national convicted of drugs offences, was executed in Singapore, 2 December 2005.



CLOSER TO A WORLD FREE FROM THE DEATH PENALTY

The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and violates the right to life. The worldwide move towards abolition is unmistakable.

However, the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean remain out of step with the global trend.



THE GLOBAL PICTURE

Only eight countries were abolitionist for all crimes in 1945 when the UN was created. Today, 140 – nearly three quarters of the world’s countries – have abolished the death penalty in law or practice.

In **Europe** and **Central Asia**, Belarus is the only country that still executes people. Of the 54 member states of the **African Union**, an average of five per year are known to have implemented death sentences in recent years. In **Asia** and the **Middle East**, regions accounting for the majority of the world’s executions, signs of progress towards ending the use of the death penalty are recorded year by year. Of 41 countries in the **Asia-Pacific** region, 17 have abolished the death penalty for all crimes, 10 are abolitionist in practice and one (Fiji) uses the death penalty only for exceptional military crimes.

In the **Americas**, most countries have either abolished the death penalty or retain it only for exceptional crimes (Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador and Peru). The only countries in the region that still retain the death penalty in their legislation are: the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, Cuba, Guatemala, Suriname and the USA. The USA is the only country that still executes people. Yet, even in the USA – a country often cited by Caribbean governments to try to justify retaining capital punishment – there is a steady move away from the death penalty. The numbers of executions carried out and death sentences imposed have dropped dramatically in recent years. More than a third of US states have abolished the death penalty, the latest to do so being Connecticut in April 2012.

DID YOU KNOW...?

- **The USA was the only G8 country to execute people in 2011.**
- **Three G20 countries carried out executions in 2011: China, Saudi Arabia and the USA.**
- **174 of the 193 member states of the UN were execution-free in 2011.**



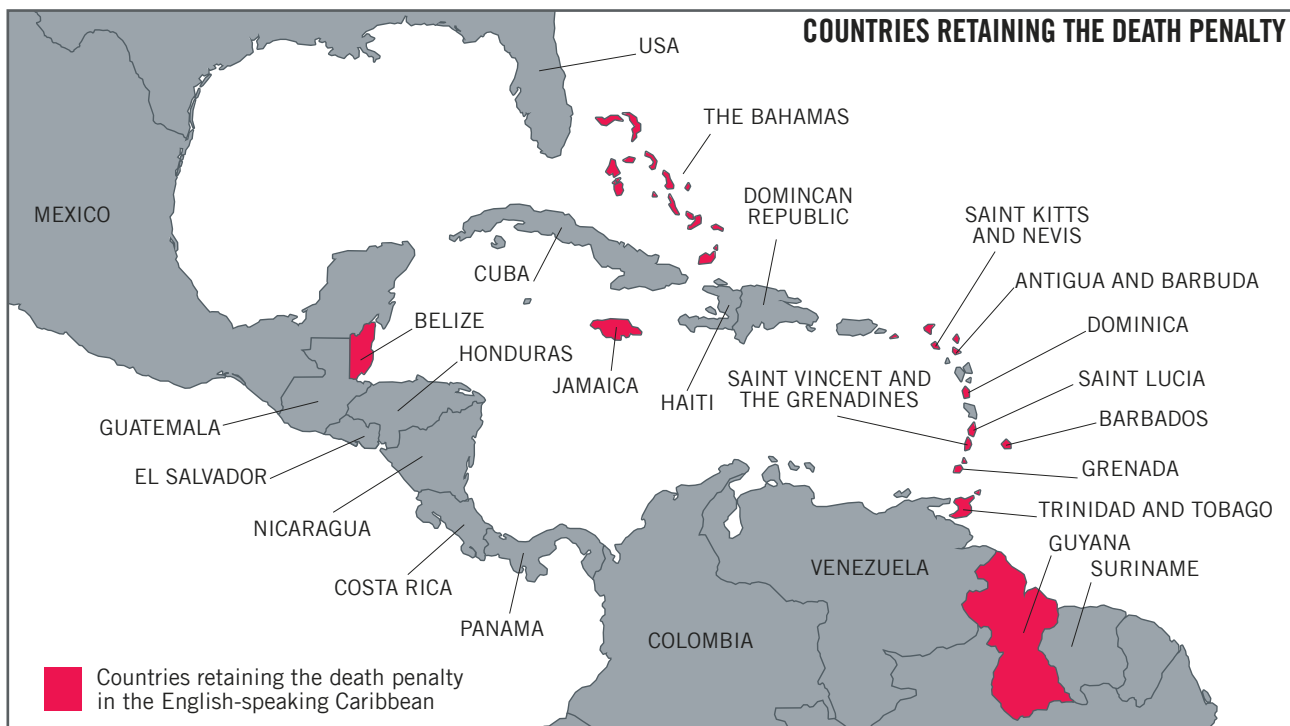
THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN – EVER MORE ISOLATED

The countries of the English-speaking Caribbean – Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago – continue to support the death penalty.

Executions in the English-speaking Caribbean are rare. One person has been executed since 2000: Charles Laplace was hanged in Saint Kitts and Nevis in December 2008. However, the shadow of the hangman's noose remains. Death sentences continue to be handed down by many Caribbean courts and a number of the region's governments have recently attempted to pass legislation aimed at facilitating a return to hanging in response to high levels of violent crime.

Governments in the English-speaking Caribbean continue to cling to their belief that the death penalty is a key answer to public security concerns, despite the lack of evidence that the death penalty helps reduce crime. It is time for this to change. It is time for governments in the English-speaking Caribbean to implement effective and constructive solutions to criminal justice issues and to remove the death penalty once and for all from the law books and consign it to history.

For more information on the death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean and human rights concerns about how it is used, see Amnesty International's report *Death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean – a human rights issue* (Index: AMR 05/001/2012).



A GLOBAL TREND, A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

“International partners could help to strengthen an abolitionist network in our region and share strategies and materials that can be used to educate the public about the issues as part of our attempts to convert hearts and minds.”

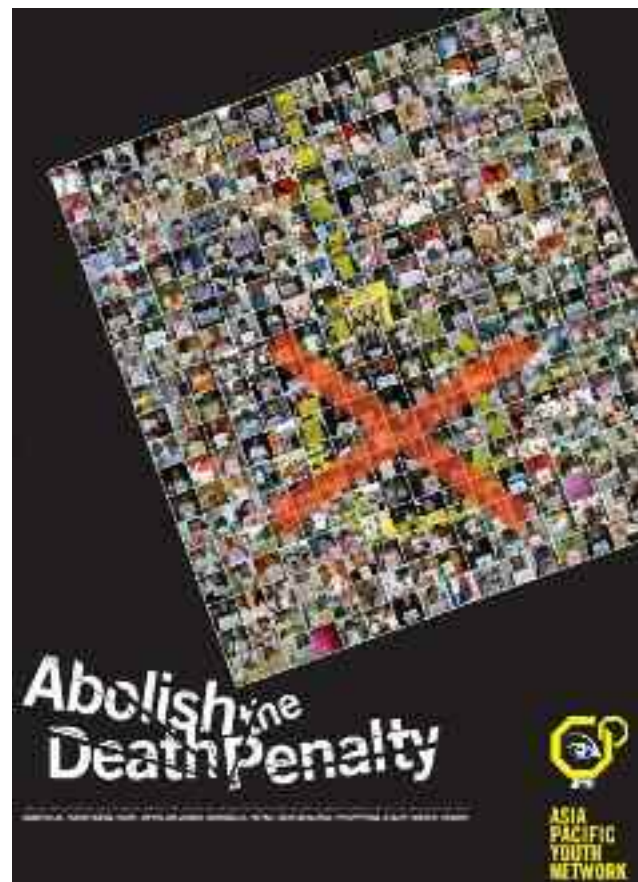
Leela Ramdeen, Chair of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice, Trinidad and Tobago, 2012

Abolition of the death penalty usually follows a long process of tenacious campaigning by civil society and activists to change attitudes. The challenges can be enormous, particularly for small organizations. But the global abolitionist movement has joined forces. In recent years, abolitionist organizations and activists have created national, regional, formal and informal networks and coalitions all around the world to offer mutual support and share resources.

■ The **World Coalition Against the Death Penalty**, for example, is an alliance of more than 130 NGOs, bar associations, local authorities and unions. The World Coalition gives a global dimension to the sometimes isolated actions taken by its members on the ground. It complements their initiatives, while respecting their independence. A key annual campaigning moment is 10 October, nominated by the World Coalition as the World Day Against the Death Penalty.

■ The **Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN)** is an informal network established in 2006. Its 51 members work for the abolition of the death penalty within the Asia-Pacific region. The network is not linked to any political party or religion and is independent of all governments. ADPAN’s members include lawyers, parliamentarians and activists who participate in actions across the Asia-Pacific region, which include sending appeals for the commutation of death sentence, organizing events to publicize the issues and sharing information.

Poster produced by the Asia-Pacific Youth Network showing a mosaic of faces. The photos were taken in several Asia-Pacific countries for the World Day Against the Death Penalty in 2008.



© Amnesty International/APYV



■ Voices against the death penalty have been emerging in the English-speaking Caribbean, too. At an **International Conference on the Death Penalty** in the Greater Caribbean, held in Madrid, Spain, in October 2011, human rights lawyers and abolitionist activists from the Greater Caribbean (including the English-speaking Caribbean, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Puerto Rico and the USA) voted to establish a Caribbean abolitionist network. This network will soon be up and running and will enable members to share expertise and offer campaigning ideas and support. It will provide a much-needed Caribbean voice against the death penalty in the region. For more information please visit: www.facebook.com/GCFLife



top: Participants at the International Conference on the Death Penalty in the Greater Caribbean, Madrid, Spain, October 2011. Participants voted to establish a Caribbean abolitionist network.

above: Activities organized by Amnesty International Thailand to mark World Day Against the Death Penalty 2011, including public signature collecting, a street play, a small parade, and an outdoor information board. These took place at the Weekend Market in Bangkok.

TIPS FROM THE NETWORKS

■ **It's all about good planning:** be clear about what you want to achieve, and how. Is it strategic to call for full abolition? Or will you achieve more by focusing on steps towards abolition (for example, respect of fair trial guarantees, abolition of the mandatory death penalty, official moratorium on executions)? What is the best approach – discreet lobbying, raising public awareness, changing the views of a particular group, or a combination of these? Agreeing a campaign strategy with other organizations will add clarity and structure to your work.

■ **Think about your audiences:** Who are your targets – the authorities, the public, journalists, school students? What is your messages and how will you get it across effectively – through debates, concerts, press conferences, demonstrations, petitions, educational and cultural activities, film screenings or poster exhibitions? One-size hardly ever fits all.

■ **Think about timing:** is there any hook you can use to engage your audience – for example, a statement by a politician, an international conference or a development in a death penalty case?

■ **Prepare your arguments:** be ready to answer the questions and arguments that you are likely to face. The resources in this toolkit should help you with this.

■ **Gain partners and allies:** try to find allies in a variety of sectors. This can be very powerful and help spread greater awareness of the issues involved.

■ **Increase the pressure:** sometimes, adding pressure from the media or international organizations can help your action. So long as you are clear from the outset about your respective objectives and expectations, working together is an asset.

■ **Evaluate your activities:** it is crucial to assess any campaign activity against the goals you have set. Did you reach the intended audiences? Are you having an impact? What went well and what could have gone better? What lessons can you learn?

RESOURCES

☒ The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty has produced a useful resource about how to frame actions around the 2012 World Day Against the Death Penalty which is available at:
www.worldcoalition.org/media/resourcecenter/EN-KitMobilisationWD2012.pdf

☒ Tools and tips for effective e-activism is available at:
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ACT70/003/2009/en

☒ Toolkit on campaigning:
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ACT10/002/2001/en



THE DEATH PENALTY – A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

“The right to life is the most fundamental of all human rights... The taking of life is too absolute, too irreversible, for one human being to inflict it on another, even when backed by legal process... The United Nations system has long advocated abolition of the death penalty or – at a minimum and in the interim – moratoriums and restrictions on its use to only ‘the most serious crimes’.”

Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General, New York, 3 July 2012

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are rights inherent to every human being. We are all born free and equal in dignity and rights. Human rights are universal.

Human rights cannot be taken away. No one has the right to deprive another person of their human rights. People still have human rights even if the laws of their countries do not recognize them. Human rights are inalienable.

States have obligations and duties under international law to respect, to protect and to fulfil human rights.

The most widely accepted statement of human rights in the world is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was unanimously adopted on 10 December 1948 by all members of the UN. It sets out a broad range of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which all men and women everywhere in the world are entitled, without distinction.

RESOURCES – HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Some useful links:

☒ www.ohchr.org/EN/PublicationsResources/Pages/Publications.aspx

☒ hre.ohchr.org/hret/Intro.aspx?Lng=en

☒ www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education/resources

☒ www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=12093

☒ www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/index.html

Activists supporting the abolition of the death penalty in West Africa, Accra, Ghana.



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THE DEATH PENALTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 3 of the UDHR states: “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.” Article 5 states: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” The death penalty and the circumstances in which it is applied have long been recognized to violate these rights.

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) guarantees the right to life and protects against its arbitrary deprivation. Although it allows the death penalty in retentionist countries, Article 6(2) states that:

“sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime” and that “[t]his penalty can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court”. Article 6(6) states: “Nothing in this article shall be invoked to delay or to prevent the abolition of capital punishment by any State Party to the present Covenant.”

The UN Human Rights Committee, which monitors how states comply with their obligations under the ICCPR, has stated that Article 6 of the ICCPR “refers generally to abolition in terms which strongly suggest that abolition is desirable” and that “all measures of abolition should be considered as progress in the enjoyment of the right to life” (General Comment No.6).

AMERICAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 4 of the American Convention on Human Rights allows the death penalty in restricted circumstances and urges countries that have abolished this punishment not to re-introduce it.

THE SECOND OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, AIMING AT THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY

The Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989. It provides for the total abolition of the death penalty, but allows states parties to retain the death penalty in time of war. None of the English-speaking Caribbean countries has ratified this Protocol.

THE PROTOCOL TO THE AMERICAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY

This Protocol was adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States in 1990. It provides for the total abolition of the death penalty, but permits states parties to retain the death penalty in wartime. None of the English-speaking Caribbean countries has ratified this Protocol.

ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Ten English-speaking Caribbean countries are states parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). This rejects the death penalty even for crimes under international law, including war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. Every UN-sponsored international court set up since 1993 has excluded the death penalty for the crimes under its jurisdiction.

UN BODIES

The UN Economic and Social Council, the UN Human Rights Committee and the UN Commission on Human Rights (the predecessor of the UN Human Rights Council) have all contributed to the progressive restriction of the use of the death penalty and urged UN member states to make progressive moves towards its abolition.

In recent years the UN General Assembly has voted on three resolutions calling for the establishment of a moratorium on executions “with a view to abolishing the death penalty”. In the last vote, in December 2010, the resolution was adopted by 109 votes in favour, with 41 against and 35 abstentions. With the exception of Dominica, which abstained, all the other English-speaking Caribbean nations voted against the resolution.

RESOURCES

- ☒ Amnesty International USA, The Death Penalty Resource Guide
- ☒ www.amnestyusa.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/deathpenaltycurriculumguide.pdf
- ☒ Teaching abolition www.worldcoalition.org/media/resourcecenter/EN-GuidePeda2011.pdf



KEY DATES

■ 10 October: World Day Against the Death Penalty

The first World Day Against the Death Penalty took place in 2003. It was founded by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty. Each year has a special theme, and in 2012 this will be to celebrate the 10th World Day Against the Death Penalty. More information is available at: www.worldcoalition.org/

■ 30 November: Cities for Life – Cities against the Death Penalty

This celebrates the anniversary of the first recorded abolition of capital punishment by a sovereign state, that of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany (located in modern Italy) on 30 November 1786. The initiative is promoted by the Community of Sant'Egidio, a Rome-based organization that works for abolition of the death penalty and is supported by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty. Iconic monuments in hundreds of cities across the world are illuminated in a worldwide call for an end to executions. More information is available at: <http://nodeathpenalty.santegidio.org/en/cities-for-life.aspx>

■ 10 December: Human Rights Day

This day marks the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. The UDHR sets out a broad range of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which all people everywhere in the world are entitled, without distinction

■ For more information on UN-sponsored international days visit: www.unac.org/en/news_events/un_days/international_days.asp

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✓ Ask your government to implement nationwide and extensive education programmes on human rights issues, including the death penalty.
- ✓ Organize human rights education activities, for example in schools, in universities and in community centers. Make sure that the death penalty is included in the discussion.
- ✓ Organize competitions among young people (for example a song, poem or art competition) in order to raise awareness of the death penalty as a human rights issue.



Activities undertaken by AI Togo to mark the World Day Against the Death Penalty 2011.

AVENUES FOR ADVOCACY

Advocacy is a set of targeted actions directed at decision-makers and influential stakeholders – such as community or religious leaders – in support of a specific policy issue.

Advocacy activities can include engaging directly with:

- decision-makers and influential stakeholders at national level;
- second governments – particularly donor countries;
- regional human rights bodies, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- international human rights bodies of the UN.

ADVOCACY IN YOUR OWN COUNTRY

TIPS FOR LOBBYING

■ **Letters to the authorities:** Stating your concerns clearly in writing generally helps open the conversation. The letters can also be used to request a meeting, either by phone or in person. Letters can be sent jointly by civil society organizations working against the death penalty in the same country.

■ **Telephone contact with the authorities:** Whenever possible, announce your telephone call by letter or email. Be polite and friendly, and make sure your message is clear. Try to be brief and to the point. Take notes and send a follow-up email or letter to the government representative to thank them for their time and to confirm any outcome of the meeting.

■ **Meetings with the authorities:** Ideally, the number of delegates for each meeting should include between three and five people. Research beforehand and plan the conversation carefully. Take care not to raise confidential points in your conversation. Be positive and constructive. You can bring materials with you to show that your organization is concerned about the use of the death penalty both at the national and international level.

■ Main points to raise at the meeting:

1. Introduce yourself and the work of your organization, particularly in support of the abolition of the death penalty;
2. Explain the aim of the meeting: bring to the attention of the representative a matter of particular concern (for example, an individual case, a legislative proposal or an executive decision); make a specific request (ideally this should be something achievable in the short term that would contribute to achieving the ultimate goal);
3. Talk the representative through your concerns;



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Workshop on strategies to campaign against the death penalty in the Caribbean with activists from Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, Belize and the Bahamas.



4. Listen to the arguments put forward by the government representative;
 5. Without being confrontational, try to answer their arguments;
 6. Thank the government representative for their time and the opportunity to meet;
 7. Send a follow-up email or letter to the government representative to thank them for their time and to confirm any outcome of the meeting;
- After the telephone call or meeting, communicate any outcome of the meeting to partner organizations – sharing the feedback from your meeting will help strategic plans and next steps.
 - Identify influential figures – for example someone from the religious or business community – who are sympathetic to abolition and approach them to see if they would be willing to raise the issue with government authorities.

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UN General Assembly, New York, USA, 20 October 2009. In recent years the UN General Assembly has voted on three resolutions calling for the establishment of a moratorium on executions.

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

SUBMISSIONS TO UN HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES

Civil society organizations can provide written submissions on the death penalty to a number of international human rights bodies.

HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES

These are committees of independent experts that monitor implementation of the core international human rights treaties. For anti-death penalty advocacy, the most relevant treaty bodies are the **Human Right Committee** and the **Committee against Torture**.

- **Human Rights Committee:** This is a body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). State parties must report initially one year after acceding to the ICCPR and then whenever the Committee requests (usually every four years). The Committee examines each report and addresses its concerns and recommendations to the state party in the form of “concluding observations”.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✓ Civil society organizations can provide their own submissions to the Committee. They are encouraged to submit a common report reflecting the agreed views of a variety of groups or organizations. This report usually follows the format of the state’s report, and is known as a “shadow report”.

For more information, visit: www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/

Email for submissions: ccpr@ohchr.org

RESOURCES

☒ The Centre for Civil and Political Rights, a not-for-profit organization that aims to promote, facilitate and develop NGO engagement with the UN Human Rights Committee, has developed Guidelines for NGOs on the Reporting Process to the UN Human Rights Committee and the role of the NGOs in this process.

Visit www.ccprcentre.org/publication/ngo-guidelines-on-the-reporting-process-of-the-un-human-rights-committee/

☒ **Committee against Torture:** This is a body of 10 independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. States parties must report initially one year after acceding to the Convention and then every four years. The Committee examines each report and addresses its concerns and recommendations to the state party in the form of “concluding observations”. The Committee may also, under certain circumstances, consider individual complaints or communications from individuals claiming that their rights under the Convention have been violated; undertake inquiries; and consider inter-state complaints.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

✓ The Committee receives information from NGOs at different stages of the reporting process and also meets with them during the session examining the report for which they have submitted information. These briefings take place prior to the examination of the state party’s report. The Committee encourages NGOs to co-ordinate their efforts and to submit consolidated reports with factual, reliable, precise, and clear information.

For more information, visit www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/index.htm

Email for submissions: cat@ohchr.org.

UN CHARTER-BASED BODIES

These include the **Human Rights Council**, an inter-governmental body within the UN system made up of 47 states responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe. The Human Rights Council oversees the **Universal Periodic Review** (see below), and “Special Procedures”, established to address either specific country situations or thematic issues. The most relevant ones for abolitionist advocacy are: **the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions** and the **Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment** (see below).

■ **Universal Periodic Review (UPR):** This is a review, on a four-year cycle of how all 193 member states are fulfilling their human rights obligations and commitments. The reviews are carried out by the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council and consist of a dialogue between the state under review and other states who can raise issues, ask questions and make recommendations for action. All UN member states can participate in the dialogue. To date, several hundred recommendations have been made to states that retain the death penalty encouraging them to seek a moratorium or move to complete abolition.

English-speaking Caribbean countries have taken a very clear position against the abolition of the death penalty at the UPR, although some have made limited commitments in relation to reducing its imposition. Please see Amnesty International’s report ***Death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean – a human rights issue*** (Index: AMR 05/001/2012) for more information.





© UN Photo/Paulo Figueiras

WHAT YOU CAN DO

✓ NGOs can participate in the consultation organized by their government. This is an opportunity to discuss issues to be included in the national report. If such a consultation doesn't seem to be happening, consider encouraging your government to organize one.

✓ Civil society groups and organizations, as well as national human rights institutions, can submit information to the UN about the situation of human rights in the countries coming up for review. These submissions should be no more than 2,815 words (or 5,630 words if submitted by a coalition of NGOs) and should be sent to the UPR Secretariat at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights by email: UPRsubmissions@ohchr.org

✓ More information on how to make submissions and the deadlines for these can be found here: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/TechnicalGuide.aspx

✓ Lobby reviewing states (both council members and observer states) to raise pertinent human rights issues and questions during the dialogue and to propose concrete recommendations to address human rights concerns in the country under review.

✓ If the state made any commitment in relation to restricting the use of the death penalty or even to move towards a moratorium, demand that this is put into practice. Activists can refer to recommendations to which the state expressed its support in all future communication with state authorities, when addressing the media and in any other campaign activity.

Srgjan Kerim (centre), President of the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly, receives a book with more than 5 million signatures collected worldwide calling for a global moratorium on executions. UN Headquarters, New York. From left to right: Renny Cushing, Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights; Sister Helen Prejean, US campaigner against the death penalty; Srgjan Kerim; Mario Marazziti, Spokesperson for the Community of Sant'Egidio; and Yvonne Terlingen, Amnesty International.

RESOURCES

☒ Information for NGOs:

www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx

☒ Existing UPR documentation:

www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx

☒ List of UPR sessions:

www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRSessions.aspx

SPECIAL PROCEDURES

■ **Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.** In relation to the death penalty the Special Rapporteur monitors the implementation of existing international standards on safeguards and restrictions relating to the imposition of capital punishment. The Special Rapporteur intervenes when capital punishment is imposed after an unfair trial; in cases of a breach of the right to appeal or the right to seek pardon or commutation of sentence; or if the death penalty is imposed on someone who was under 18 at the time the crime was committed; someone who suffers from mental illness or disability; or someone who is pregnant or recently gave birth.

■ **Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.** In relation to the death penalty, the Special Rapporteur monitors the implementation of the death penalty in the light of the prohibition of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment. The Special Rapporteur can transmit urgent appeals to states in cases of imminent extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions or risk of torture and send communications on past alleged cases of extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions or torture; undertake fact-finding country visits; and submit annual reports to the UN Council on Human Rights and the UN General Assembly.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

✓ **Submit communications:** via email to urgent-action@ohchr.org. Model questionnaires to help you document cases can be found at

www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Executions/Pages/ModelQuestionnaire.aspx

www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Torture/SRTorture/Pages/model.aspx

✓ **Request a country visit:** NGOs can make the case for the Special Rapporteurs to visit a country and can advise on who to meet, where to visit and what the key human rights issues are. Even though the visit has to be agreed by the state, NGOs play an important role in alerting the Special Rapporteurs to the need for a visit. In the follow-up to a country visit, NGOs can help disseminate the Special Rapporteur's report and monitor and report on the implementation of any recommendations.



End the death penalty

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



© Amnesty International (Photo: Reuben Stearns)

Toots and the Maytals, one of the best known Jamaican ska and reggae vocal groups, campaign against the death penalty, September 2011.

THE DANGERS OF FLAWED JUSTICE

“To me, to kill one innocent man for a crime he didn't commit is so serious a crime that I wouldn't want to be party to it.”

Justice Dame Joan Sawyer, former President of the Court of Appeal of the Bahamas, expressing her concern that the system of detection in the Bahamas was such that the possibility of error could not be discounted, quoted in *The Nassau Guardian*, 26 November 2010.

Many of the criminal justice systems in English-speaking Caribbean countries are struggling with caseloads that far exceed their capacity. Inadequate legal representation, lack of witness protection programmes and poor forensic services are also common. These failings, allied to police incompetence and corruption often result in violations of due process. (Please see Amnesty International's report *Death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean – a human rights issue* for more information.)

Three of the key human rights concerns about the way the death penalty is applied in the English-speaking Caribbean are: the lack of mental health assessments, inadequate legal representation and mandatory death sentences.

LACK OF MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

International law prohibits the imposition of the death penalty and the execution of prisoners suffering from mental disabilities. In addition, standards set by the UK-based Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC), the highest court of appeal for many English-speaking Caribbean countries, require psychiatric reports to be presented for all defendants in capital cases.

However, in many cases, mental health assessments are either not undertaken at all or are inadequate and it is often only during the final appeal that a mental health assessment is carried out, often after appeals to the Court of Appeal have been dismissed.

Sheldon Isaac was sentenced to death for murder in Saint Kitts and Nevis in January 2008. As part of his appeal, a clinical psychologist and forensic psychiatrist were asked to obtain fresh medical evidence, which was then presented to the JCPC. This showed that Sheldon Isaac was severely brain damaged as a result of being shot in the head prior to his conviction. In March 2012, the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeal acquitted Sheldon Isaac, concluding that he was unfit to stand trial in the first place, and should never have been sentenced to death.



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Entrance of Golden Grove Prison in Trinidad and Tobago where women on death row are held.



INADEQUATE LEGAL REPRESENTATION

“When a person is first placed under arrest in the Bahamas, they don’t have guaranteed legal representation at that very early critical stage. Even if people are aware of their legal right to representation, then most of them can’t afford it. If a confession is coerced, there is no way to prove it a later stage.”

Arthur Dion Hanna Jr., Director of the Legal Aid Clinic, Eugene Dupuch Law School, the Bahamas, 2012

Most people charged with capital crimes in the English-speaking Caribbean cannot afford a private lawyer and so rely on legal aid services. However, low fees paid and long delays in murder trials mean that many able lawyers are not willing to take up death penalty cases. In many cases, the Courts of Appeal and the JCPC have quashed death sentences on the ground of the incompetence of legal counsel.

The poor quality of criminal investigations in Caribbean jurisdictions often results in people being sentenced to death solely on the basis of witness statements or confessions. In some cases, defendants claim that confessions were extorted under torture or without the full understanding of the defendant.

“It’s very easy to convict someone under our legal system who may be innocent, and there is no redress, unless you have public campaigns to overturn a decision, and we don’t have that kind of culture in the Bahamas, so given the absence of that sort of activism in our community, the death penalty really is a dangerous weapon in the hands of the legal system.”

Arthur Dion Hanna Jr, Director of the Legal Aid Clinic, Eugene Dupuch Law School, the Bahamas, 2012

THE MANDATORY DEATH PENALTY

“The automatic and mandatory imposition of the death penalty constitutes an arbitrary deprivation of life... in circumstances where the death penalty is imposed without any possibility of taking into account the defendant’s personal circumstances or the circumstances of the particular offence.”

UN Human Rights Committee, 2002

A mandatory death sentence prevents judges from exercising their discretion and considering all extenuating circumstances in a case (for example, long-standing victimization or the mental capacity of the accused).

The UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions has stated that the death penalty should under no circumstances be mandatory by law and that it is inconsistent with the prohibition of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Several courts in the Caribbean have found mandatory death sentences to be unconstitutional. Today, only Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados retain the mandatory death penalty for murder.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- ✓ Keep informed about cases of possible miscarriages of justice or cases in which international standards may not have been respected. To do this, you need to keep in close touch with lawyers working on death penalty cases.
- ✓ Lobby national authorities, highlighting the need to respect international standards in individual cases.
- ✓ In consultation with the lawyers, transmit information urgently to the relevant UN Special Rapporteurs, the Human Rights Committee and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.



THE FALLACY OF DETERRENCE

“From the time someone commits a murder, you can’t save him, so we have to save them when they are 10 and 11 and 15... We will always have crime, but what we need to do is to reduce whatever brings and drives people to crime and as a country we are better off spending our time, money and energy trying to tackle these issues.”

Adriel Brathwaite, Attorney General of Barbados, 2 October 2011

“We would be deluding ourselves if we were to believe that the execution of... a comparatively few people each year... will provide the solution to the unacceptably high rate of crime... The greatest deterrent to crime is the likelihood that offenders will be apprehended, convicted and punished.”

Constitutional Court of South Africa, 1995

Supporters of the death penalty often say that the threat of execution is effective in preventing crime because people fear death more than anything else.

However, there is no convincing evidence that the death penalty has a unique deterrent effect on crime. The most comprehensive study carried out by the UN on the relationship between the death penalty and homicide rates concluded: “research has failed to provide scientific proof that executions have a greater deterrent effect than life imprisonment... The evidence as a whole still gives no positive support to the deterrent hypothesis” (UN document, E/AC.57/1988/CRP.7).

Studies in the USA and Canada, for instance, have demonstrated that abolition of capital punishment did not lead to higher crime rates. In 2004 in the USA, the average murder rate for states that used the death penalty was 5.71 per 100,000 of the population compared with 4.02 per 100,000 in states that did not use it. Canada’s homicide rate remains over one third lower than when the death penalty was abolished in 1976.

In the Greater Caribbean, there is no correlation between retention of the death penalty and low crime rates: six of the 10 countries with the highest murder rates in the region retain the death penalty (the Bahamas, Belize, Guatemala, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Saint Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago).

A recent study (“Executions, Imprisonment and Crime in Trinidad and Tobago”, by David Greenberg and Biko Agozino) found no link between the use of the death penalty and murder rates in Trinidad and Tobago: “over a span of 50 years, during which these sanctions were being deployed in degrees that varied substantially, neither imprisonment nor death sentences nor executions had any significant relationship to homicides. In the years immediately following an appeals court’s determination limiting executions, the murder rate fell”. The report concludes that its analysis “seriously undermines the politicians’ contention that capital punishment offers a solution to Trinidad and Tobago’s soaring homicide rate”. (Please see chapter 5 of the report *Death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean – a human rights issue* (Index: AMR 05/001/2012) for more information).

Given the low conviction rates in many of the English-speaking Caribbean countries, it is also quite implausible that before committing homicide a person would consider the risk of being hung and would refrain from wrong doing.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✓ Gather information from your country and the region that shows the fallacy of the deterrence argument, such as official statistics on crime rates, detection rates and conviction rates.
- ✓ Liaise with academics. Academics play an important role in creating informed opinions and feeding the debate. You can discuss with them which studies would be needed in order to advance the anti-death penalty debate.



THE TYRANNY OF PUBLIC OPINION

“We have to have the rule of law. The rule of law must be always maintained and, as a prosecutor, even though you say you are the Director of Public Prosecutions and you are looking into the public interest, you are not into a popularity contest or to satisfy the yearning of people for blood and this kind of thing”.

Colin Williams, Director of Public Prosecutions, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, November 2011

“We need to reach out to the government to try to see if we can have a debate with politicians to see how we could provide solutions that prevent crime and bring communities back together as opposed to taking more lives”.

Brendon O'Brien, from abolitionist organization Doh Do Death, Trinidad and Tobago, 2012

A DETERRENT?

In the Caribbean, as in many parts of the world with high rates of violent crime, support for the death penalty is linked to anxieties about violent crime. The belief that the death penalty helps reduce or deter violence crime is often encouraged by politicians who see this as a quick way to try to allay public fears. But there is no convincing evidence that the death penalty helps reduce or deter crime. And when the public is informed about the realities of the death penalty and allowed to engage in a proper discussion about what would make their societies safer, support for the death penalty usually falls, often quite dramatically.

The death penalty is not an effective deterrent and most people don't really believe that it is. To effectively campaign against the death penalty, we need to get beyond the slogans about its supposed deterrent effect and look at people's concerns about public safety. We need to push politicians to have meaningful discussions about measures that would really protect people from violent crime.

For more information on how to respond to arguments about deterrence, see chapter 5 of the report *Death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean – a human rights issue* (Index: AMR 05/001/2012).

CULTURE?

Calls for abolition in the Caribbean are often portrayed as an attempt by Europe to “impose its cultural values”. The reality is that the many nations that have abandoned the use of capital punishment come from differing regions and cultures. The death penalty is a human rights issue, and these rights belong to every human being whoever they are and wherever they live.

An informed public opinion is shaped by education and moral leadership. Amnesty International welcomes the multiplicity of discourses on human rights grounded in different cultures and religions and believes that different visions contribute to our understanding of human rights. At the same time, the organization believes that human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. Although they may often have been developed in the European context, they derive from many different traditions and are acknowledged by all the members of the UN as the standards by which they have agreed to abide.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

✓ Engage with religious representatives or leaders. If your religion has a clear position against the death penalty, discuss with them how you could coordinate human rights education and awareness raising activities. If your religion does not have a clear position or supports the death penalty, meet with representatives to establish dialogue, explain your arguments and lobby them at least not to convey messages of support for the death penalty.

POPULAR?

Polls conducted by the media in the Caribbean usually highlight the fact that a large majority of those polled are in favour of the death penalty and want to see executions resumed. However, as with most surveys on this issue, these opinion polls tend to simplify the complexities of public opinion and results are heavily influenced by how the questions are shaped and the surveys conducted. Over time, opinions change. Abolition itself helps in changing public opinion as the death penalty soon starts to be viewed as a thing of the past.

In a survey carried out in 2010 in Trinidad and Tobago by the University of the West Indies and the University of Oxford, UK, support for the death penalty among a group of 500 interviewees fell from 92 per cent to 49 per cent when they were given full information about cases. Even more significantly, perhaps, deterrence was cited in only 1.3 per cent as one of the reasons for preferring the death penalty.

RESOURCES

☒ The survey's findings are available at:
www.deathpenaltyproject.org/assets/17/original/Report_Final_Text.pdf?1307441474



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Sister Helen Prejean speaks at a staff meeting at Amnesty International's International Secretariat, London, UK, 20 October 2008. Sister Helen Prejean is a Roman Catholic nun, educator and anti-death penalty activist and author. Her book *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States* was nominated for a 1993 Pulitzer Prize. As the founder of Survive, a victim's advocacy group in New Orleans, she continues to counsel not only inmates on death row (she has witnessed five executions in Louisiana), but also families of murder victims.



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top: Letters in support of Chiou Ho-shun who was sentenced to death in Taiwan in 1989. He has been detained for over 22 years while his case has bounced between the High Court and the Supreme Court. He has asked the organizations supporting him to keep the letters for him: "All these letters are very precious to me."
above: Event organized by a coalition of NGOs and civil society groups that actively support the abolition of capital punishment in Indonesia, October 2010.

PROTECTION?

Some support the death penalty because they believe it prevents prisoners from re-offending. However, by its very nature, the death penalty can only be carried out against a prisoner who is already imprisoned and therefore removed from society and not in a position to re-offend.

Some argue that imprisonment alone has not prevented people from re-offending once they have been released. However, experience around the world shows that high rates of re-offending are linked to poor parole procedures and lack of opportunities for rehabilitation while prisoners are serving their sentences.

RESOURCES

☒ Several organizations have looked in more depth at the question of alternatives to the death penalty. Penal Reform International, for example, has produced an Information Pack on Alternative Sanctions to the Death Penalty, which can be downloaded from this link: www.penalreform.org/death-penalty-publications

THE MEDIA

The media plays a major role in shaping public opinion. In the Caribbean, the death penalty debate tends to surface in the media after a particularly gruesome murder has provoked widespread public outrage. Activists find it very hard to get a hearing at such a time as arguments against the death penalty can be seen as focusing too much on the rights of the criminal and not enough on those of the victims. It is, therefore, important to engage pro-actively with the media on the death penalty at other times, when the public is more open to arguments that the death penalty is a human rights issue.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✓ **Make a list** of the media outlets with which you would like to establish a relationship so that you can keep a comprehensive database of journalist contacts. Establishing good relationships with journalists is an integral part of any effective media outreach campaign.
- ✓ **Contact journalists:** invite them to an event on human rights, including the death penalty. You can also send them links to online articles and videos related to the death penalty and abolition, from the region and other parts of the world.
- ✓ **Op-eds:** write a column for your local newspaper discussing one dimension of the death penalty.
- ✓ **Letters to the editor:** these are usually written in response to a story, editorial, or something else that was published recently in the newspaper.

“To a Christian whose belief system is rooted in forgiveness, the death penalty is unacceptable... Everywhere experience shows us that executions brutalize both those involved in the process and the society that carries them out. Nowhere has it been shown that the death penalty reduces crime or political violence... Retribution, resentment and revenge have left us with a world soaked in the blood of far too many of our sisters and brothers. The death penalty is part of that process. It says that to kill in certain circumstances is acceptable, and encourages the doctrine of revenge. If we are to break these cycles, we must remove government-sanctioned violence.”

Desmond Tutu, former Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa (2008)



top: Death Penalty action at Amnesty International's International Council Meeting, Mexico, 15 August 2007.

above: Activists in Puerto Rico demonstrate in front of the Federal Court in Hato Rey against the imposition of the death penalty in Puerto Rico. The t-shirts spell out “No en mi nombre” (Not in my name).

THE RIGHTS OF THE VICTIMS' FAMILIES

“More and more victims’ families are challenging the common assumption that the death penalty offers closure.”

Murder Victims’ Families for Human Rights, Annual Report 2008

“From experience, we know that revenge is not the answer. The answer lies in reducing violence, not causing more death. The answer lies in supporting those who grieve for their lost loved ones, not creating more grieving families. It is time we break the cycle of violence.”

Marie Deans, founder of Murder Victims’ Families for Reconciliation, whose mother-in-law was murdered in 1972

“When you execute somebody, they’re gone, they don’t suffer anymore. The ones who suffer are their family members. I think we really are punishing the wrong people.”

Ruth Klassen Andrews, whose mother was murdered in 1969

Opposing the death penalty does not mean opposing the rights of victims’ families. Abolition advocates are often seen as taking the side of the alleged perpetrator and asked to consider the rights of those whose loved ones have been murdered. However, in opposing the death penalty, abolitionists in no way seek to minimize or condone the crimes for which those sentenced to death were convicted, nor do they seek to belittle the intense suffering of the families of murder victims.

Death penalty advocates who claim to be acting on behalf of victims imply that all those affected by violent crime support the death penalty universally. This is far from true. Many relatives of murder victims object to the death penalty being carried out in the name of their loved ones.

“It was clear to me that an execution was not going to bring my father back or give me or the rest of my family any peace... Victims’ families have come in different ways and times to the understanding that the death penalty does not help them heal and is not the way to pursue justice for victims. The assumption that all victims’ family members support the death penalty is a false assumption, and we have seen that victims’ voices are essential to effective efforts to abolish the death penalty. Lawmakers believe that they are under a moral obligation to provide the option of the death penalty, to address victims’ pain. They assume that opposing the death penalty means opposing victims, and that’s not a stance that lawmakers want to take or believe it is politically wise to take.”

Renny Cushing founder of Murder Victims’ Families for Human Rights

Renny Cushing’s father was shot and killed in his home in New Hampshire, USA, in June 1988. Renny was already opposed to the death penalty and his father’s murder did nothing to change that. In 2004, Renny founded Murder Victims’ Families for Human Rights, an organization that seeks to bring together abolitionist groups and the victims’ rights movement.

Renny believes that victims’ families would be better served by being provided with support and counselling. Working for abolition of the death penalty should also mean working for prevention of murder: “If we truly cared about victims, we would put all our knowledge and resources into saving them. Crime prevention, not retaliation, should be our number one goal.”





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above: Renny Cushing, founder member of Murder Victims Families for Human Rights, together with other anti-death penalty activists take part in an action at the Fourth World Congress Against the Death Penalty in Geneva, Switzerland, February 2010. The Congress was organized by Ensemble Contre La Peine de Mort (ECPM) (www.abolition.fr) in partnership with the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (www.worldcoalition.org).

top: Rais Bhuiyan speaking at the Southern Methodist University, Dallas, USA, 9 September 2011. Rais Bhuiyan campaigned for the commutation of the death sentence imposed on the man who tried to kill him.



© Rais Bhuiyan

Mark Stroman was sentenced to death in the USA in 2002 for the murder on 4 October 2001 of Vasudev Patel, an Indian migrant. At his trial, the state also introduced evidence that on 15 September 2001 Mark Stroman had shot and killed Waqar Hasan, a Pakistani migrant. A few days later, on 21 September 2001, Mark Stroman had shot Rais Bhuiyan, a migrant from Bangladesh, in the face. Rais Bhuiyan survived but lost his sight in one eye.

Rais Bhuiyan appealed for Mark Stroman not to be executed and for the death sentence to be commuted. He said: "Hate doesn't bring a peaceful solution to any situation, which I realized after I became a victim of a hate crime because of the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center tragedy. This single incident changed my entire life and helped me to realize that hate only brings fear, misery, resentment and disaster into human lives... I forgave Mark Stroman many years ago. I believe he was ignorant, and not capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, otherwise he wouldn't have done what he did."

In a 2011 interview with the *New York Times*, Rais Bhuiyan was asked why he was trying to save Mark Stroman's life. He said: "He [Stroman] said he did this as an act of war and a lot of Americans wanted to do it but he had the courage to do it – to shoot Muslims. After it happened I was just simply struggling to survive in this country. I decided that forgiveness was not enough. That what he did was out of ignorance. I decided I had to do something to save this person's life. That killing someone in Dallas is not an answer for what happened on Sept. 11." Mark Stroman was executed on 20 July 2011.

"Solidarity is a key Catholic social justice principle. We must stand in solidarity with both victim and offender. While we have a duty to support victims and their families, and while offenders must be made to account to society for their actions, we reject the death penalty as society's response to violent crime and violence. Even those convicted of the worst crimes have inherent dignity and worth and deserve to live. The right to life is a fundamental element of respect for human rights."

Leela Ramdeen, Chair of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice, Trinidad and Tobago, 2012

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✓ Reach out to the families of murder victims to express solidarity and understand their needs.
- ✓ Lobby governments to provide families of murder victims with support and counseling.
- ✓ Challenge perceived ideas around the death penalty's role in providing closure, justice and the prevention of further violence.
- ✓ Ask families of murder victims to join in and help campaign against the death penalty.



TO SUM UP



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The death penalty is:

- The ultimate denial of human rights – it violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is the ultimate cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment.
- Ineffective – it has no proved impact on crime reduction.
- Arbitrary – the risk of fatal error is much greater for poor defendants, the majority of whom lack adequate legal representation.
- Irreversible – the risk of executing an innocent person is always present.
- Not a solution – abolitionists have the deepest sympathy for victims' families, but the death penalty only serves to create more victims and perpetuates a cycle of violence.

Anti death penalty demonstration by 250 Amnesty International delegates outside State House, Boston, USA, 1993.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Amnesty International urges governments of countries that still retain the death penalty to:

- Immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty, as called for by UN General Assembly resolutions 62/149, 63/168 and 65/206, and vote in future in favour of such resolutions (please see chapter 3 of Amnesty International's report *Death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean – a human rights issue*).
- Commute without delay all death sentences to terms of imprisonment, and remove prisoners from death row.
- Immediately remove from their law any death penalty provisions that violate international human rights law, such as its mandatory imposition or as a penalty for crimes which do not meet the threshold of “most serious crimes”, as stipulated in Article 6.2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- Ensure that trials for crimes carrying the death penalty comply with the most rigorous internationally recognized standards for fair trial; where that has not been the case the individual must be given a retrial in proceedings that comply with these standards, and without recourse to the death penalty.

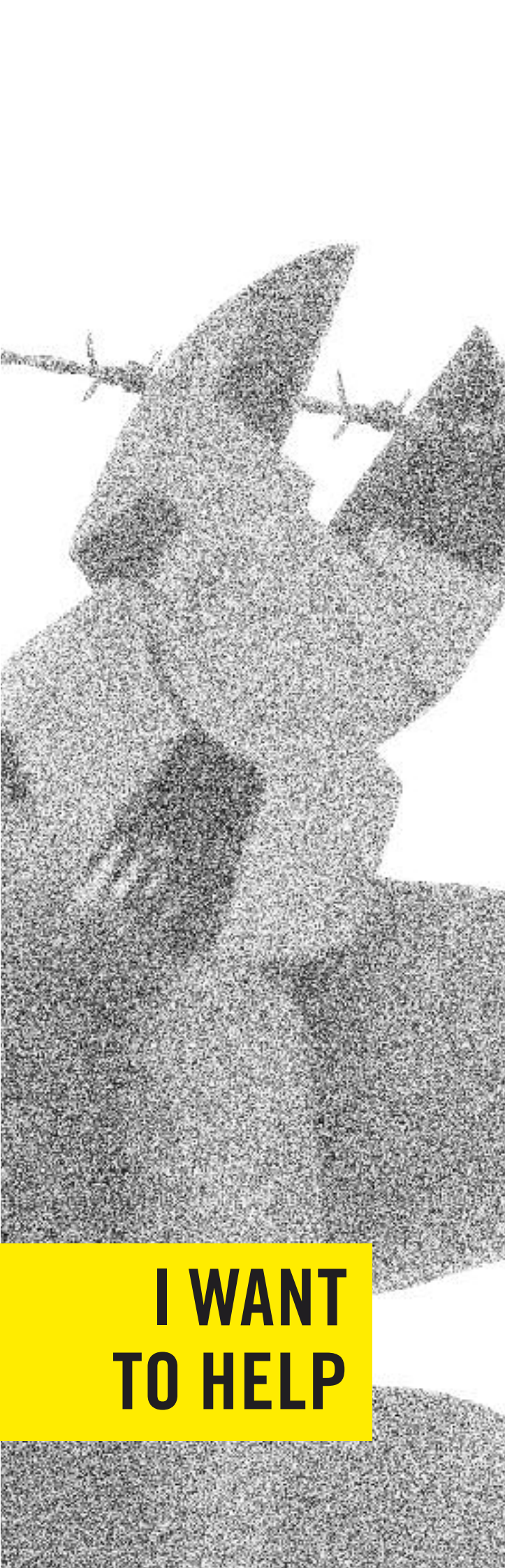
- Ensure full compliance with all international standards on the use of the death penalty, including the prohibition of the death penalty against juveniles and juvenile offenders (people who were under the age of 18 at the time the crime was committed), people with mental disabilities; the elderly; and pregnant or nursing women.

- Publicize on an annual basis comprehensive statistics on the death penalty and facts around the administration of justice in death penalty cases.

Amnesty International urges all governments to:

- Take the necessary steps to ensure the prompt ratification, without reservations, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and its Second Optional Protocol, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.
- Provide technical support to and share their experiences with other governments on how to move towards abolition of the death penalty.





**I WANT
TO HELP**

WHETHER IN A HIGH-PROFILE CONFLICT OR A FORGOTTEN CORNER OF THE GLOBE, **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** CAMPAIGNS FOR JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND DIGNITY FOR ALL AND SEEKS TO GALVANIZE PUBLIC SUPPORT TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Activists around the world have shown that it is possible to resist the dangerous forces that are undermining human rights. Be part of this movement. Combat those who peddle fear and hate.

- Join Amnesty International and become part of a worldwide movement campaigning for an end to human rights violations. Help us make a difference.
- Make a donation to support Amnesty International's work.

Together we can make our voices heard.

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TURNING THE TIDE IN THE CARIBBEAN TOWARDS AN END TO THE DEATH PENALTY

The campaign against the death penalty is truly global and includes people and organizations from every region and many diverse cultures and societies. Its impact can be seen in the fact that 140 states all over the world have turned their backs on capital punishment and abolished it in law or practice. However, the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean continue to support this ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment that violates the right to life.

This toolkit is for activists working towards the abolition of the death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean. Drawing on many years of Amnesty International's work to promote all human rights and to oppose violations of those rights, including the death penalty, it provides practical tips and suggestions for advocacy and campaigning. It sets out key arguments and relevant international human rights standards and provides information about resources that activists can use to strengthen and broaden the campaign against the death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean.

This toolkit should be used in conjunction with Amnesty International's report *Death penalty in the English-speaking Caribbean – a human rights issue* (Index: AMR 05/001/2012).

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