
amnesty international

The death penalty: List of abolitionist and retentionist countries

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More than half the countries in the world have abolished the death penalty in law or practice.

Attached is a list of countries and territories, indicating whether or not their laws provide for the death penalty. For abolitionist countries, information is also given, where available, on the date of abolition and the date of the last execution carried out; and for countries which have abolished the death penalty for all crimes, the date when it was abolished for ordinary offences if this was done before. (The date given for abolition is normally the date when the decision to abolish the death penalty was taken, but if that decision only came into effect several years later, the latter date is given.)

Also attached is a list of countries which have abolished the death penalty in law since 1976. It shows that in the past decade, an average of three countries a year have abolished the death penalty in law or, having done so for ordinary offences, have gone on to abolish it for all offences.

As of 1 February 2004, the number of abolitionist and retentionist countries was as follows:

Abolitionist for all crimes	78	
Abolitionist for ordinary crimes only		15
Abolitionist in practice	24	
Total abolitionist in law or practice		117
Retentionist		78

Regular updates to the List of abolitionist and retentionist countries are posted on the death penalty page on the Amnesty International website at www.amnesty.org/deathpenalty.

1. ABOLITIONIST FOR ALL CRIMES

Countries whose laws do not provide for the death penalty for any crime

Abbreviations: **Date (A)** = date of abolition for all crimes; **Date (AO)** = date of abolition for ordinary crimes; **Date (last ex.)** = date of last execution; **K** = date of last known execution; **Ind.** = no executions since independence

Country	Date (A)	Date (AO)	Date (last ex.)
ANDORRA	1990		1943
ANGOLA	1992		
AUSTRALIA	1985	1984	1967
AUSTRIA	1968	1950	1950
AZERBAIJAN	1998		1993
BELGIUM	1996		1950
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA	2001	1997	
BULGARIA	1998		1989
CAMBODIA	1989		
CANADA	1998	1976	1962
CAPE VERDE	1981		1835
COLOMBIA	1910		1909
COSTA RICA	1877		
COTE D=IVOIRE	2000		
CROATIA	1990		
CYPRUS	2002	1983	1962
CZECH REPUBLIC	1990		
DENMARK	1978	1933	1950
DJIBOUTI	1995		Ind.
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	1966		
ECUADOR	1906		
ESTONIA	1998		1991
FINLAND	1972	1949	1944

Country	Date (A)	Date (AO)	Date (last ex.)
FRANCE	1981		1977
GEORGIA	1997		1994K
GERMANY	1987		
GUINEA-BISSAU	1993		1986K
HAITI	1987		1972K
HONDURAS	1956		1940
HUNGARY	1990		1988
ICELAND	1928		1830
IRELAND	1990		1954
ITALY	1994	1947	1947
KIRIBATI			Ind.
LIECHTENSTEIN	1987		1785
LITHUANIA	1998		1995
LUXEMBOURG	1979		1949
MACEDONIA	1991		
MALTA	2000	1971	1943
MARSHALL ISLANDS			Ind.
MAURITIUS	1995		1987
MICRONESIA			Ind.
MOLDOVA	1995		
MONACO	1962		1847
MOZAMBIQUE	1990		1986
NAMIBIA	1990		1988K
NEPAL	1997	1990	1979
NETHERLANDS	1982	1870	1952
NEW ZEALAND	1989	1961	1957
NICARAGUA	1979		1930

Country	Date (A)	Date (AO)	Date (last ex.)
NORWAY	1979	1905	1948
PALAU			
PANAMA			1903K
PARAGUAY	1992		1928
POLAND	1997		1988
PORTUGAL	1976	1867	1849K
ROMANIA	1989		1989
SAMOA	2004		Ind.
SAN MARINO	1865	1848	1468K
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE	1990		Ind.
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO	2002		
SEYCHELLES	1993		Ind.
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	1990		
SLOVENIA	1989		
SOLOMON ISLANDS		1966	Ind.
SOUTH AFRICA	1997	1995	1991
SPAIN	1995	1978	1975
SWEDEN	1972	1921	1910
SWITZERLAND	1992	1942	1944
TIMOR-LESTE	1999		
TURKMENISTAN	1999		
TUVALU			Ind.
UKRAINE	1999		
UNITED KINGDOM	1998	1973	1964
URUGUAY	1907		
VANUATU			Ind.
VATICAN CITY STATE	1969		
VENEZUELA	1863		

2. ABOLITIONIST FOR ORDINARY CRIMES ONLY

Countries whose laws provide for the death penalty only for exceptional crimes such as crimes under military law or crimes committed in exceptional circumstances, such as wartime crimes

Abbreviations: **Date (AO)** = date of abolition for ordinary crimes; **Date (last ex.)** = date of last execution; **K** = date of last known execution; **Ind.** = no executions since independence

Country	Date (AO)	Date (last ex.)
ALBANIA	2000	
ARGENTINA	1984	
ARMENIA	2003	
BOLIVIA	1997	1974
BRAZIL	1979	1855
CHILE	2001	1985
COOK ISLANDS		
EL SALVADOR	1983	1973K
FIJI	1979	1964
GREECE	1993	1972
ISRAEL	1954	1962
LATVIA	1999	1996
MEXICO		1937
PERU	1979	1979
TURKEY	2002	1984

3. ABOLITIONIST IN PRACTICE

Countries that retain the death penalty for ordinary crimes such as murder but can be considered abolitionist in practice in that they have not executed anyone during the past 10 years and are believed to have a policy or established practice of not carrying out executions. The list also includes countries which have made an international commitment not to use the death penalty.

Abbreviations: **Date (last ex.)** = date of last execution; **K** = date of last known execution; **Ind.** = no executions since independence

Country	Date (last ex.)
ALGERIA	1993
BENIN	1987
BHUTAN	1964K
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	1957K
BURKINA FASO	1988
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	1981
CONGO (Republic)	1982
GAMBIA	1981
GRENADA	1978
KENYA	
MADAGASCAR	1958K
MALDIVES	1952K
MALI	1980
MAURITANIA	1987
NAURU	Ind.
NIGER	1976K
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	1950
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	1999
SENEGAL	1967
SRI LANKA	1976
SURINAME	1982
TOGO	

Country	Date (last ex.)
TONGA	1982
TUNISIA	1991

4. RETENTIONIST

Countries and territories that retain the death penalty for ordinary crimes

AFGHANISTAN	MONGOLIA
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	MOROCCO
BAHAMAS	MYANMAR
BAHRAIN	NIGERIA
BANGLADESH	OMAN
BARBADOS	PAKISTAN
BELARUS	PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY
BELIZE	PHILIPPINES
BOTSWANA	QATAR
BURUNDI	RWANDA
CAMEROON	SAINT CHRISTOPHER & NEVIS
CHAD	SAINT LUCIA
CHINA	SAINT VINCENT & GRENADINES
COMOROS	SAUDI ARABIA
CONGO (Democratic Republic)	SIERRA LEONE
CUBA	SINGAPORE
DOMINICA	SOMALIA
EGYPT	SUDAN
EQUATORIAL GUINEA	SWAZILAND
ERITREA	SYRIA
ETHIOPIA	TAIWAN
GABON	TAJIKISTAN
GHANA	TANZANIA
GUATEMALA	THAILAND
GUINEA	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
GUYANA	UGANDA
INDIA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
INDONESIA	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
IRAN	UZBEKISTAN
IRAQ	VIET NAM
JAMAICA	YEMEN
JAPAN	ZAMBIA
JORDAN	ZIMBABWE
KAZAKSTAN	
KOREA (North)	
KOREA (South)	
KUWAIT	
KYRGYZSTAN	
LAOS	
LEBANON	
LESOTHO	
LIBERIA	
LIBYA	
MALAWI	
MALAYSIA	

COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE ABOLISHED THE DEATH PENALTY SINCE 1976

1976: **PORTUGAL** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1978: **DENMARK** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1979: **LUXEMBOURG, NICARAGUA** and **NORWAY** abolished the death penalty for all crimes. **BRAZIL, FIJI** and **PERU** abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes.

1981: **FRANCE** and **CAPE VERDE** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1982: The **NETHERLANDS** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1983: **CYPRUS** and **EL SALVADOR** abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes.

1984: **ARGENTINA** abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes.

1985: **AUSTRALIA** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1987: **HAITI, LIECHTENSTEIN** and the **GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC** (1) abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1989: **CAMBODIA, NEW ZEALAND, ROMANIA** and **SLOVENIA** (2) abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1990: **ANDORRA, CROATIA** (2), the **CZECH AND SLOVAK FEDERAL REPUBLIC** (3), **HUNGARY, IRELAND, MOZAMBIQUE, NAMIBIA** and **SAO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1992: **ANGOLA, PARAGUAY** and **SWITZERLAND** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1993: **GUINEA-BISSAU, HONG KONG** (4) and **SEYCHELLES** abolished the death penalty for all crimes. **GREECE** abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes.

1994: **ITALY** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1995: **DJIBOUTI, MAURITIUS, MOLDOVA** and **SPAIN** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1996: **BELGIUM** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1997: **GEORGIA, NEPAL, POLAND** and **SOUTH AFRICA** abolished the death penalty for all crimes. **BOLIVIA** abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes.

1998: **AZERBAIJAN, BULGARIA, CANADA, ESTONIA, LITHUANIA** and the **UNITED KINGDOM** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

1999: **EAST TIMOR** (now **TIMOR-LESTE**), **TURKMENISTAN** and **UKRAINE** abolished the death penalty for all crimes. **LATVIA** (5) abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes.

2000: **ALBANIA** (6) abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes. **COTE D=IVOIRE** and **MALTA** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

2001: **BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA** abolished the death penalty for all crimes. (7) **CHILE** abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes.

2002: **CYPRUS** and **YUGOSLAVIA** (now **SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO**) abolished the death penalty for all crimes. **TURKEY** abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes.

2003: **ARMENIA** abolished the death penalty for ordinary crimes. (8)

2004: **SAMOA** abolished the death penalty for all crimes.

Notes:

(1) In 1990 the German Democratic Republic became unified with the Federal Republic of Germany, where the death penalty had been abolished in 1949.

(2) Slovenia and Croatia abolished the death penalty while they were still republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The two republics became independent in 1991.

(3) In 1993 the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic divided into two states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

(4) In 1997 Hong Kong was returned to Chinese rule as a special administrative region of China. Since then Hong Kong has remained abolitionist.

(5) In 1999 the Latvian parliament voted to ratify Protocol No. 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights, abolishing the death penalty for peacetime offences.

(6) In 2000 Albania ratified Protocol No. 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights, abolishing the death penalty for peacetime offences.

(7) In 2001 Bosnia-Herzegovina ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, abolishing the death penalty for all crimes.

(8) In 2003 Armenia ratified Protocol No. 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights, abolishing the death penalty for peacetime offences.