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Iraq: Reimposition of death penalty is a step backwards

Amnesty International deplores the decision of the Interim Government of Iraq to reimpose the death penalty and believes that it will do nothing to restore security for the people of Iraq.

"The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. It violates the right to life. It is irrevocable and can be inflicted on the innocent," Amnesty International said.

Government officials announced on Sunday that capital punishment would be reinstated for a range of crimes including, murder, drug trafficking and endangering national security.

Amnesty International acknowledges the grave security situation prevailing in Iraq today as well as the duty of the Iraqi Interim Government to protect the lives of Iraqi citizens and residents in Iraq and to ensure their security. However, the organization does not regard introduction of the death penalty as the appropriate response to this challenge. The Death penalty has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishment.

Amnesty International works for an end to executions everywhere in the world and has urged the Interim Government of Iraq on frequent occasions not to reinstate the death penalty and to consider abolishing it on a permanent basis.

"If the Interim Government of Iraq resumes executions, it will be moving sharply against the global trend towards the abolition of death penalty. Over half the countries in the world have now abolished it in law or practice. In the past decade, more than three countries a year on average have abolished it for all crimes," Amnesty International said.

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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