



AI Index: IOR 40/3737/2021  
23 February 2021

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## ORAL STATEMENT

Item 3: Biennial high-level panel discussion on the question of the death penalty

# **DEATH PENALTY HAS NO PROVEN DETERRENT EFFECT ON CRIME AND IS THE ULTIMATE CRUEL, INHUMAN AND DEGRADING PUNISHMENT**

UN Human Rights Council  
Forty-sixth session  
22 February – 23 March 2021

Madam President,

The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, and a violation of the right to life. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception - regardless of who is accused, the nature or circumstances of the crime, guilt or innocence or method of execution.

There is no credible evidence that the death penalty has a greater deterrent effect on crime than imprisonment, as noted by a number of domestic and comparative studies conducted around the world.<sup>1</sup> The deterrence hypothesis only distracts public attention from the much-needed, long-term solutions that could be more effective in tackling crime and its root causes. It also assumes that people who commit serious crimes necessarily do so after rationally considering the consequences of their actions. Critically, the deterrence argument fails to address the human rights of those sentenced to death.

Madam President,

Instead of using the deterrence argument to justify the use of the death penalty, retentionist states should direct their attention towards devising comprehensive crime prevention programmes to tackle crime.

Amnesty International urges all countries that retain the death penalty to abolish it for all crimes; and pending abolition, to publish on an annual basis comprehensive information on the

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, Not making us safer — Crime, public safety and the death penalty, 10 October 2013, Index number: ACT 51/002/2013, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/8000/act510022013en.pdf>

death penalty and facts around the administration of justice in death penalty cases.

We welcome Chad's abolition of the death penalty for all crimes in 2020 and hope other states can learn from their experience.

Thank you.