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**THE APPLICATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY FOR DRUG-RELATED OFFENCES AND ITS SERIOUS IMPACT
ON THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Oral statement to the 30th session of the UN Human Rights Council (14 Sept – 2 Oct 2015)
Item 8: General Debate**

Amnesty International welcomes the discussion on the impact of current drug policies on the enjoyment of human rights that took place this afternoon.¹ This statement draws on a written statement that we submitted for that discussion.²

We urge States and other stakeholders to ensure that the outcome of the UN General Assembly Special Session on drugs in 2016 and other related discussions call for the incorporation of respect and protection of human rights as an integral part of illicit drug policies.

We note positively the recommendation in the study by the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights presented to this session reiterating that drug-related offences do not meet the threshold of the “most serious crimes” for which the death penalty may be imposed under international law.³

At present, more than 30 UN Member States still retain the death penalty for drug-related offences in their national legislation, and Amnesty International has recorded related death sentences and executions in 11 countries since 2014, including countries where death sentences are mandatory for such offences.⁴ In 2015, executions for drug-related crimes have been recorded in China, Iran, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia.

Amnesty International urges all States that still use the death penalty for these offences to immediately halt all executions and bring legislation in line with international law as a first step.

We also urge the Human Rights Council to work with other UN entities involved in counter-narcotics operations, as well as Member States, to ensure that all programmes and policies are carried out in full compliance with international law and standards and do not contribute to the use of the death penalty for drug-related offences.

Amnesty International had planned to ask the UNODC representative on this afternoon’s Panel about what concrete steps have been taken by UN entities, in particular UNODC, to promote the abolition of the death penalty as part of cooperation in counter-narcotic programmes and which measures have been developed to ensure full compliance with the 2012 guidelines “UNODC and the promotion and protection of human rights”.

Thank you.

¹ Panel discussion on the impact of the world drug problem on the enjoyment of human rights, 28 September 2015. Amnesty International had planned to make this oral statement in the Panel but was unable to attain a speaking slot due to speaking time restrictions.

² [A/HRC/30/NGO/149](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/2437/2015/en/) , also available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/2437/2015/en/>

³ Study on the impact of the world drug problem on the enjoyment of human rights - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN document: A/HRC/30/65.

⁴ For a list of these countries, please see Amnesty International written statement [A/HRC/30/NGO/149](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/2437/2015/en/), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/2437/2015/en/>