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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL REPORT

DEATH SENTENCES AND EXECUTIONS 2025

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International is a movement of 10 million people which mobilizes the humanity in everyone and campaigns for change so we can all enjoy our human rights. Our vision is of a world where those in power keep their promises, respect international law and are held to account. We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and individual donations. We believe that acting in solidarity and compassion with people everywhere can change our societies for the better.

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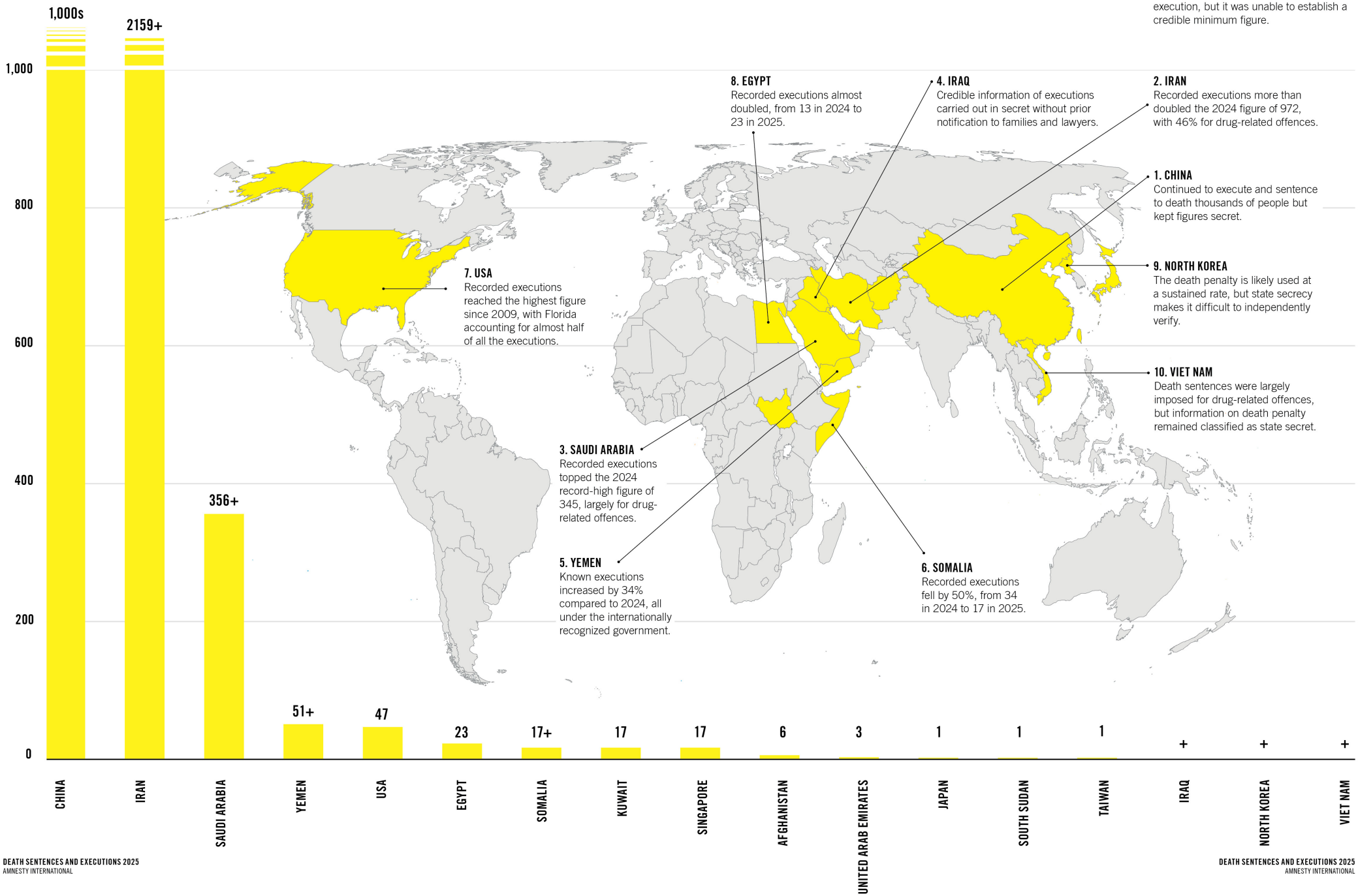
EXECUTING COUNTRIES IN 2025

This map indicates the general locations of boundaries and jurisdictions and should not be interpreted as Amnesty International's view on disputed territories.

Of the executing countries in 2025, the 10 countries listed on the map have persistently executed people in the past five years (2021-2025).

+ indicates that the figure that Amnesty International has calculated is a minimum. Where + is not preceded by a number, this means that Amnesty International is confident that there was more than one execution, but it was unable to establish a credible minimum figure.



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NOTE ON AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S FIGURES ON THE USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY

This report covers the judicial use of the death penalty for the period January to December 2025. As in previous years, information is collected from a variety of sources, official figures; judgments; information from individuals sentenced to death; their families and representatives; media reports; and, as specified, other civil society organizations.

Amnesty International reports on executions, death sentences and other aspects of the use of the death penalty, such as commutations and exonerations, where there is reasonable confirmation. In many countries, governments do not publish information on their use of the death penalty. In China and Viet Nam, data on the use of the death penalty is classified as a state secret. During 2025, little or no information was available on some countries – in particular Belarus, Laos and North Korea – due to restrictive state practices. Therefore, for a significant number of countries, Amnesty International's figures on the use of the death penalty are the minimum recorded. The true overall figures are likely to be higher.

In 2009, Amnesty International stopped publishing its estimated figures on the use of the death penalty in China, a decision that reflected concerns about how the Chinese authorities misrepresented Amnesty International's numbers. Amnesty International always made clear that the figures it was able to publish on China were significantly lower than the reality, because of the restrictions on access to information. China has yet to publish any figures on the death penalty; however, the available information indicates that each year thousands of people are executed and sentenced to death. Amnesty International renews its call on the Chinese authorities to publish information on the use of the death penalty in China.

Where Amnesty International receives and is able to verify new information after publication of this report, it updates its figures online at: amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/death-penalty/

In tables and lists, where "+" appears after a figure next to the name of a country – for example, Tunisia (18+) – it means that Amnesty International confirmed either 18 executions or death sentences or persons under sentence of death in Tunisia but believes that there were more than 18. Where "+" appears after a country name without a figure – for instance, Iraq (+) – it means that Amnesty International has corroborated executions, death sentences or persons under sentence of death (more than one) in that country but had insufficient information to provide a credible minimum figure. When calculating global and regional totals, "+" has been counted as two, including for China.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature or circumstances of the crime; guilt, innocence or other characteristics of the individual; or the method used by the state to carry out the execution. The organization campaigns for total abolition of the death penalty.

THE USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN 2025

> ***"Only justice systems that are humane and rights-based can truly deliver justice. [...] I hope that soon we will see universal recognition – reflected in law – that the way to protect societies is not through executions, but through strong institutions and accountability."***
>
> UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk[1]

GLOBAL TRENDS

In 2025, Amnesty International recorded the highest number of executions carried out globally since 1981. At least 2,707 people were executed in 2025, an increase by more than two thirds on the total recorded in 2024. The resort to the death penalty surged as the authorities of several countries placed this cruel punishment at the centre of flawed public security and "tough on crime" narratives to assert control, project state power and score political points. This trend was strongest in countries where the authorities have tightened their grip on power by restricting civic space, silencing dissent and displaying disregard for protections established under international human rights law and standards.

The sharp rise was driven primarily by Iran, which recorded its highest number of executions in decades (at least 2,159) and more than doubled the 2024 total. The Iranian authorities continued to weaponize the death penalty, often after grossly unfair trials, to instil fear among the population and punish those who challenged, or are perceived to have challenged, the Islamic Republic of Iran establishment. Among other examples, two men were executed in connection with the 2022 Woman Life Freedom protests. Under the guise of national security, the Iranian authorities also intensified their use of the death penalty against those accused of espionage or collaboration with Israel in the aftermath of Israeli military strikes on Iran in June 2025, executing at least 11 men on these charges, as opposed to two before the strikes in June.

The authorities of Saudi Arabia exceeded their record-high figure of 2024 among a sustained use of executions to punish drug-related offences; and by resorting to the death penalty for broadly defined terrorism-related offences, with many cases impacting those belonging to the country's Shia minority who supported "anti-government" protests between 2011 and 2013.

As in previous years, the 2025 total does not include the thousands of executions that Amnesty International believed were carried out in China. In the face of the state secrecy that continued to surround data on the death penalty, disclosures and commentary by the Chinese authorities once again pointed to an intentional use of the death penalty to send a message that the state would not tolerate threats to public security or stability; and would impose severe punishment to maintain order. This was also evident in the prominent featuring of the death penalty in the drive to tackle corruption in the financial sector and punish those found

[1] UN Human Rights Council, "High Commissioner Türk: Only justice systems that are humane and rights-based can truly deliver justice", 26 September 2025, https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/09/high-commissioner-turk-only-justice-systems-are-humane-and-rights?sub-site=HRC

guilty of abusing their positions for personal gain, as the number of publicly available reports of new death sentences imposed for bribery and other financial offences increased.

In the USA, the unprecedented rise in executions in one state – Florida – drove the national total to the highest figure since 2009, as officials at the federal level and in some states promoted inflammatory and flawed narratives on the death penalty and its effect on crime, advocating for an increase in its use.

The resurgence of highly punitive approaches in the global "war on drugs" was also a factor behind the rise in executions in several countries. Nearly half (1,257 or 46%) of all known executions were recorded for drug-related offences, in five countries (China, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Singapore). The authorities of Algeria, Kuwait, and the Maldives also drove legislative efforts to expand the scope of the death penalty for drug-related crimes.

Similarly, the government of Burkina Faso adopted a draft bill to reform the Penal Code, which includes reinstating the death penalty for certain offences such as "high treason", "terrorism", and "acts of espionage". The scope of the death penalty was also expanded in Myanmar, ahead of elections. The authorities in Chad and Peru established a commission to study the possibility of reinstating the death penalty; and those of Israel tabled discriminatory bills to introduce and facilitate the use of the death penalty targeting Palestinians.[2] A bill was also introduced to the Nigerian Senate seeking to amend the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2013, to designate kidnapping, hostage-taking and other related offences as acts of terrorism that would carry the mandatory death penalty.

Despite the record-high execution numbers, figures from 2025 also show the isolation of countries that still implement the death penalty. For the first year since President Alexander Lukashenko assumed office in 1994, no death sentences were recorded to have been imposed or implemented in Belarus. For the 17th consecutive year, the USA was the only country in the Americas region to execute people; and within the USA, close to half of all executions were carried out in Florida. Executions in Sub-Saharan Africa were confined to Somalia and South Sudan, two of the five countries known to have implemented death sentences in the last decade. Afghanistan was the only country in South Asia to pursue executions; Singapore and Viet Nam were the only countries known to do so among the ASEAN group. Tonga was the only country in the Pacific to retain the death penalty in law. In the Middle East and North Africa region, 96% of all recorded executions were carried out in Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Although four countries (Japan, South Sudan, Taiwan and United Arab Emirates) executed people in 2025 for the first time after a hiatus, the total number of countries known to have carried out executions – 17 – remained in line with low yearly totals recorded since 2018 of 20 countries or fewer.

In a global context where the international human rights system was under unprecedented and existential threats, progress towards abolition continued. The authorities of Viet Nam abolished the death penalty for eight offences, including drug transportation, bribery and embezzlement. In the Gambia, the death penalty was abolished for the crimes of murder, treason and other offences against the state.

Bills to abolish the death penalty were pending before the legislative bodies of Lebanon and Nigeria. The Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan declared attempts to reintroduce the death penalty in the country unconstitutional.

In a historic decision, the Governor of Alabama, Kay Ivey, granted clemency to Rocky Myers. It was the first clemency granted to a Black person on death row – and only the second in the state – since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. All existing death sentences were commuted in Zimbabwe.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally and has been campaigning globally for its abolition since 1977, when only 16 countries were abolitionist for all crimes. By the end of 2025, that figure had risen to 113.

EXECUTIONS

Amnesty International recorded 2,707 executions in 2025, an increase by 78% from the 1,518 known executions in 2024. It is the highest figure recorded by Amnesty International since 1981, when 3,191 executions were recorded (excluding China). The rise in executions was primarily linked to a spike in executions in Iran, where the country total reached at least 2,159, more than doubling the 2024 figure of at least 972; and accounting for 80% of all recorded executions.

[2] The legislative body of Israel (Knesset) adopted the Death Penalty for Terrorists Law, 5786–2026 on 30 March 2026.

The known totals do not include the thousands of people believed to have been executed in China, which Amnesty International believes to have remained the world's lead executioner.[3] In addition, Amnesty International could not determine credible minimum figures for executions carried out in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and Viet Nam, countries believed to continue to punish people by death extensively.

Because of this, the global total presented in this report constitutes a minimum figure that only partially describes the true extent of states' resort to executions during the year.

EXECUTIONS RECORDED GLOBALLY IN 2025

Afghanistan (6), China (+), Egypt (23), Iran (2,159+), Iraq (+), Japan (1), Kuwait (17), North Korea (+), Saudi Arabia (356+), Singapore (17), Somalia (17+), South Sudan (1), Taiwan (1), United Arab Emirates (UAE, 3), USA (47), Viet Nam (+), Yemen (51+).

In addition to Iran, significant increases were recorded in several countries that nearly doubled their yearly totals compared to 2024: Egypt (from 13 in 2024 to 23 in 2025), Singapore (from 9 to 17), USA (from 25 to 47) and Yemen (from at least 38 to at least 51). The figure for Kuwait nearly tripled, from 6 in 2024 to 17 in 2025.

Decreases were recorded in Iraq, where an exact number could not be confirmed for 2025, while at least 63 executions were known to have been carried out in the previous year; and Somalia, where the recorded total decreased from 34 to 17.

The executions known to have been carried out in Iran and Saudi Arabia accounted for 93% of the total. More than 40% of all recorded executions were carried out for drug related offences, in violation of international human rights law and standards.[4]

Women were known to have been executed in China (+), Egypt (1), Iran (61), Kuwait (1) and Saudi Arabia (5).

Executions were recorded in 17 countries, an increase by two on the record-low figure recorded for 2024 (15). The authorities of Japan, South Sudan, Taiwan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) resumed executions after a hiatus.[5] No executions were recorded in Oman and Syria, while executions were known to have been carried out in these countries in 2024. Amnesty International was unable to confirm a figure for the State of Palestine.

[3] In 2009, Amnesty International stopped publishing its estimated figures on the use of the death penalty in China. Instead, the organization has challenged the authorities to prove their claims that they are achieving their goal of reducing the application of the death penalty by publishing the figures themselves. Little or partial information was available for several other countries (see Note on Amnesty International's figures on the use of the death penalty in this report for further information).

[4] See textbox at the end of this report section.

[5] The authorities of Japan and South Sudan carried out the first executions in the country since 2022; in Taiwan, since 2020; and in the UAE since 2021.

2025 KNOWN EXECUTING COUNTRIES BY INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

- **Organization of American States:** 1 out of 34 countries carried out executions – USA.
- **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe:** 1 out of 57 countries executed people – USA.
- **African Union:** 3 out of 55 countries carried out executions – Egypt, Somalia, South Sudan.
- **League of Arab States:** 7 out of 22 countries executed people – Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, UAE, Yemen.
- **Association of Southeast Asian Nations:** 2 out of 11 countries carried out executions – Singapore and Viet Nam.
- **Commonwealth:** 1 out of 56 countries executed people – Singapore.
- **Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie**: 2 out of 53 countries carried out executions – Egypt and Viet Nam.[6]
- **United Nations:** 16 out of 193 member states (8% of UN membership) were known to have executed people – Afghanistan, China, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kuwait, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, South Sudan, United Arab Emirates, USA, Viet Nam, Yemen.

METHODS OF EXECUTION IN 2025[7]

BEHEADING	Saudia Arabia
HANGING	Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kuwait, Singapore,South Sudan
LETHAL INJECTION	China, USA, Viet Nam
SHOOTING	Afghanistan, China, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Taiwan, UAE, USA, Yemen
NITROGEN GAS ASPHYXIATION	USA

DEATH SENTENCES

Amnesty International recorded 2,334 new death sentences in 2025, a slight increase (12%) on the global known total of 2,087 in 2024. Variations in the availability of information on death sentences for some countries continues to be a significant factor in the determination of the global total, rendering year-on-year comparisons methodologically challenging.

[6] Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger withdrew from the organization in 2025.
[7] Amnesty International did not receive any reports of judicial executions by stoning in 2025.

Amnesty International recorded new death sentences in 48 countries, two more than in 2024 and four fewer than in 2023 (52). No figure was available for Palestine (State of) due to the ongoing armed conflict.

Courts in four countries – Belarus, Botswana, Ghana, Uganda– were not known to have sentenced people to death in 2025 while they had done so in 2024. Death sentences were recorded in six others – Bahrain, Comoros, Gambia, the Maldives, Qatar, Taiwan – after a hiatus.

DEATH SENTENCES RECORDED GLOBALLY IN 2025

Afghanistan (+), Algeria (11), Bahrain (1), Bangladesh (185+), China (+), Comoros (2+), Democratic Republic of the Congo (359+), Egypt (492), Ethiopia (5+), Gambia (3), India (128), Indonesia (68+), Iran (+), Iraq (79+), Japan (1), Jordan (6+), Kenya (2), Kuwait (15), Laos (6+), Lebanon (1), Libya (13+), Malaysia (15), Maldives (3), Mali (10), Mauritania (31+), Morocco/Western Sahara (1), Myanmar (6+), Niger (6+), Nigeria (243+), North Korea (+), Pakistan (68+), Qatar (4+), Saudi Arabia (+), Singapore (2), Somalia (13+), South Sudan (+), Sri Lanka (49+), Sudan (87+), Syria (1+), Taiwan (2), Tanzania (8+), Thailand (119), Trinidad and Tobago (1), Tunisia (18+), UAE (3), USA (23), Viet Nam (138+), Yemen (94+).

Amnesty International recorded significant rises in the number of death sentences known to have been imposed in several countries compared to 2024. Most notably, recorded figures nearly tripled in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (from at least 125 in 2024 to at least 359 in 2025) and in Sudan (from at least 30 to at least 87); and tripled in Laos, from at least two to at least six.

Known death sentences more than doubled in Kuwait (from at least seven to 15) and nearly doubled in Sri Lanka (from at least 25 to at least 49). Increases by 35% and 31% were recorded in Egypt (from 365 to 492) and Nigeria (from at least 186 to at least 243), respectively.

Significant decreases in the number of imposed death sentences were recorded in the following countries: Iraq (a 61% decrease, from at least 200 to at least 79), Japan (a 67% decrease, from three to one), Malaysia (a 38% decrease, from at least 24 to 15), Niger (63%, from at least 16 to at least six), Pakistan (42%, from at least 117 to at least 68) and Yemen (38%, from at least 152 to at least 94).

Women were known to have been sentenced to death in Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Iraq, Jordan, Laos, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Globally, at least 25,508 people were under sentence of death at the end of 2025, including 9,118 (36%) in the Asia-Pacific region alone.[8]

COMMUTATIONS, PARDONS AND EXONERATIONS

Amnesty International recorded commutations or pardons of death sentences in 24 countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Morocco/Western Sahara, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, UAE, USA, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.[9]

[8] For several countries where Amnesty International believed a high number of prisoners were under sentence of death, figures were not available or it was impossible to estimate a credible number. These included China, Egypt, Iran, Laos, Libya, Myanmar, North Korea and Saudi Arabia.

[9] Commutation is the process by which a death sentence is exchanged for a less severe sentence such as a term of imprisonment, often by the judiciary on appeal but sometimes also by the executive. A pardon is granted when the convicted individual is completely exempted from further punishment.

Amnesty International recorded one exoneration of individuals under sentence of death in the USA.[10] A posthumous exoneration was granted in South Korea.[11]

THE DEATH PENALTY IN 2025: IN VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

The death penalty continued to be used in ways that violated international law and standards in 2025. Some examples included:

- At least 17 **public executions** in Afghanistan (6) and Iran (11).
- At least 3 people – in Iran (1) and Saudi Arabia (2) – were executed for alleged crimes that occurred when they were **below 18 years of age**; Amnesty International believed that other people in this category remained on death row in Iran and Saudi Arabia.[12]
- People with **mental or intellectual disabilities** were under sentence of death in several countries, including Japan and USA.
- Death sentences were known to have been imposed after proceedings that did not meet international **fair trial standards** in several countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Yemen.
- **"Confessions"** that may have been extracted through **torture or other ill-treatment** were used to convict and sentence people to death in Iran and Saudi Arabia.
- Death sentences were imposed **without the defendant being present (in absentia)** in Bangladesh, Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Yemen.
- **Mandatory death sentences** were imposed in Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia,
- Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago and Yemen.[13]
- **Military courts sentenced** civilians to death in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. **Special Courts** imposed death sentences in Bangladesh, India, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.
- The death penalty was used for **crimes that did not involve intentional killing** and therefore did not meet the threshold of "most serious crimes" under international law,[14] including:
  - **Drug-related offences:** Amnesty International recorded 1, 257 drug-related executions, which constituted 46% of total executions recorded globally and nearly doubled the 2024 figure (637). Executions for drug-related offences were recorded in five countries: China (+),[15] Iran (998, 46% of the total), Kuwait

[10] Death Penalty Information Center, deathpenaltyinfo.org/policy-issues/innocence-database

[11] Exoneration is the process whereby, after sentencing and the conclusion of the appeals process, the convicted person is later cleared from blame or acquitted of the criminal charge, and therefore is regarded as innocent in the eyes of the law.

[12] Often the actual age of the prisoner is in dispute because no clear proof of age exists, such as a certificate of registration at birth. Governments should apply a full range of appropriate criteria in cases where age is in dispute. Good practice in assessing age includes drawing on knowledge of physical, psychological and social development. Each of these criteria should be applied in a way that gives the benefit of the doubt in disputed cases so that the individual is treated as a person who was below 18 years of age at the time of the crime, and accordingly should ensure that the death penalty is not applied in such circumstances. Such an approach is consistent with the principle that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, as required by Article 3(1) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[13] The UN Human Rights Committee has stated that "mandatory death sentences that leave domestic courts with no discretion as to whether to designate the offence as a crime warranting the death penalty, and whether to issue the death sentence in the particular circumstances of the offender, are arbitrary in nature." Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36 on Article 6: Right to Life, UN Doc. CCPR/C/GC/36 [3 September 2019], para. 37.

[14] As prescribed by Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36 on Article 6: Right to Life, UN Doc. CCPR/C/GC/36 [3 September 2019], para. 35.

[15] When calculating global and regional totals, "+" has been counted as two.

(2, 12%) Saudi Arabia (240, 67%) and Singapore (15, 88%). Information on Viet Nam, which is likely to have carried out such executions, was unavailable.

- There were 249 new death sentences known to have been imposed for drug-related offences in 16 countries: Bangladesh (2, 1%), China (+),[16] Egypt (at least 12, 2%), Indonesia (56, 82%), Iran (+), Iraq (35, 44%), Kuwait (4, 27%), Laos (6, 100%), Libya (1, 8%), Malaysia (7, 47%), Qatar (at least 1, 25%), Saudi Arabia (+), Singapore (2, 100%), Sri Lanka (7, 14%), Viet Nam (100, 72%) and Yemen (10, 11%).

  In Thailand, of the 429 people under sentence of death at the end of 2025, 313 (73%) including 52 women, had been convicted of drug-related offences.

- **Economic crimes**, such as corruption: China.

- Acts considered offences against the religion, such as **"apostasy"** or **"blasphemy"**: Afghanistan, Pakistan.

- **Sexual relationships** outside of marriage between consenting adults of the same or opposite sex: Yemen.

- **Rape:** Bangladesh, India, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

- **Different forms of "treason", "acts against national security"**, **"collaboration" with a foreign entity, "espionage", "questioning the leader's policies", participation in "insurrectional movement and terrorism", "armed rebellion against the state/ruler" and other "crimes against the state"**, whether or not they led to a loss of life: China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

[16] When calculating global and regional totals, "+" has been counted as two.

REGIONAL OVERVIEWS

AMERICAS

REGIONAL TRENDS

- US executions reached the highest figure since 2009, with Florida driving the spike.
- Four US states resumed executions, while the number of death sentences imposed across the country continued to reflect historical low trends.
- For the 17th consecutive year, the USA was the only country in the region to execute people. Trinidad and Tobago and the USA remained the only two countries in the Americas known to have imposed new death sentences.
- The Governor of Alabama granted the first clemency to a Black person on death row – and only the second in the state - since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976.

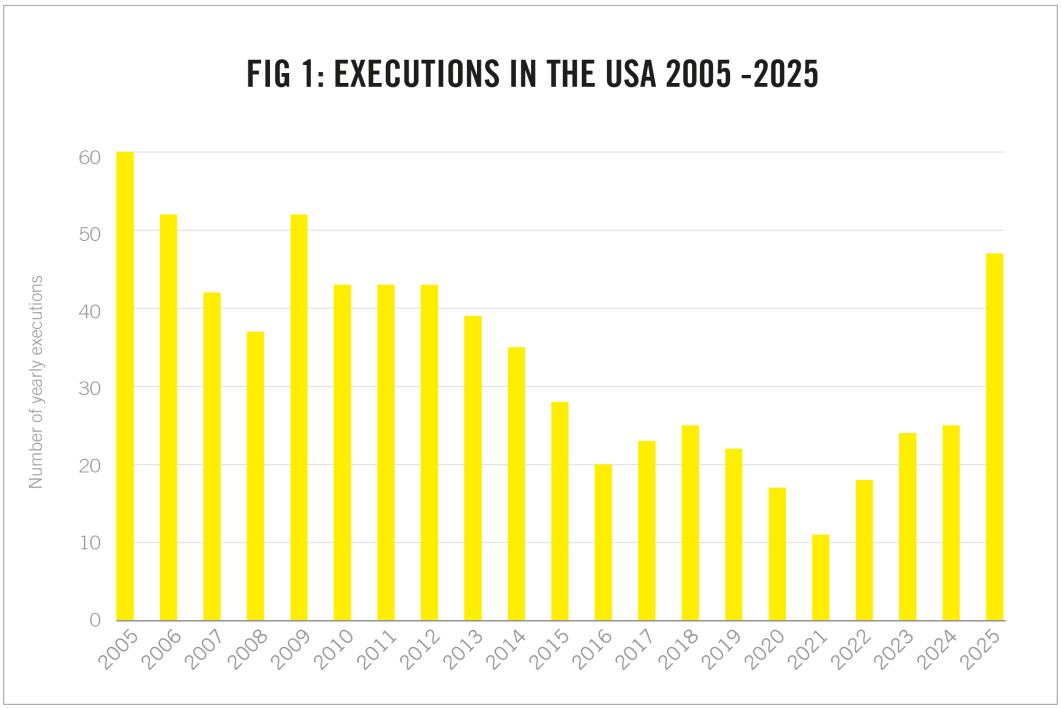
COUNTRY	2025 RECORDED EXECUTIONS	2025 RECORDED DEATH SENTENCES	PEOPLE KNOWN TO BE UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH AT THE END OF 2025
Antigua and Barbuda	0	0	0
Bahamas	0	0	0
Barbados	0	0	1
Belize	0	0	0
Brazil (Abolitionist for ordinary crimes only)	0	0	0
Chile (Abolitionist for ordinary crimes only)	0	0	0
Cuba	0	0	0
Dominica	0	0	0
El Salvador (Abolitionist for ordinary crimes only)	0	0	0
Grenada	0	0	1
Guatemala (Abolitionist for ordinary crimes only)	0	0	0

COUNTRY	2025 RECORDED EXECUTIONS	2025 RECORDED DEATH SENTENCES	PEOPLE KNOWN TO BE UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH AT THE END OF 2025
Guyana	0	0	24
Jamaica	0	0	0
Peru (Abolitionist for ordinary crimes only)	0	0	0
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0	0	0
Saint Lucia	0	0	0
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0	0	1
Trinidad and Tobago	0	1	38
USA[17]	47 in 11 states: Alabama (5) Arizona (2) Florida (19) Indiana (2) Louisiana (1) Mississippi (2) Missouri (1) Oklahoma (2) South Carolina (5) Tennessee (3) Texas (5)	2025: 23 in 8 states: Alabama (4) Arizona (2) California (5) Florida (5) Missouri (1) North Carolina (2) Pennsylvania (1) Texas (3)	1,948, including 47 women, in 28 jurisdictions[18] Seven states held more than 100 people: California 580 Florida 251 Texas 169 Alabama 155 North Carolina 121 Ohio 109 Arizona 108

The unprecedented increase in executions in one US state – Florida – represented the pinnacle of regressive steps and alarming commentary that put the death penalty at the centre of flawed security narratives for political gain. These setbacks cast a shadow on progress towards restricting the use of this cruel punishment otherwise recorded across the Americas region, as the number of new death sentences imposed and people living under threat of execution continued to reflect historical low trends.

The authorities of Florida carried out the highest number of yearly executions (19) recorded in the state since 1972, when the US Supreme Court declared the existing death penalty statutes unconstitutional and a nation-wide hiatus in executions ensued.[19] The increase in Florida drove the national total of executions for 2025 (47) to the highest figure since 2009 (52).

[17] Figures based on Amnesty International's monitoring of information published by Departments of Corrections, courts and media in relevant US states.
[18] The state of New Hampshire, where the death penalty was abolished in 2019, still held one person under sentence of death. The Death Penalty Information Centre reports that three transgender women are on death row in two states, Florida and Ohio: https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/death-row/women
[19] Supreme Court of the United States, *Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. 238 (1972).



Eleven US states carried out executions in 2025, an increase by two compared to 2024 (nine) and six in 2023 (five). Arizona and Mississippi resumed executions for the first time since 2022, while Louisiana executed the first person since 2010. The authorities of Tennessee carried out executions for the first time since 2020, following challenges to the state lethal injection protocol and to the sourcing of the drugs for the execution.[20] After Florida, Alabama, South Carolina and Texas recorded the highest numbers of executions in the country, with five in each state.

Alabama and Louisiana were the only two states to resort to gas asphyxiation (nitrogen hypoxia) to execute four and one individuals, respectively, during the year. The rise in South Carolina – from two in 2024 to five in 2025 – was particularly noticeable after its authorities resumed executions in 2024 by lethal injection and put to death three men by firing squad in 2025.

Amnesty International opposes all executions, by all methods, unconditionally. Yet, the implementation of these methods of execution put on display the determination of some state authorities to pursue executions at all costs. Various states sought to amend execution protocols and source alternative equipment to the existing lethal injection protocol in an effort to circumvent legal challenges that had led to hiatuses in executions.

The authorities of Georgia and Utah did not carry out any executions in 2025, while they did so in the previous year.

The number of death sentences recorded in the USA slightly decreased from 26 in 2024 to 23 in 2025, remaining in line with the low figures recorded since 2020 (between 18 and 26, yearly). Fewer US states imposed death sentences in 2025, eight compared to 11 in 2024. No new death sentences were recorded in 2025 in Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, Ohio and Tennessee. However, individuals were sentenced to death in Missouri, North Carolina and Pennsylvania for the first time after a hiatus. Death sentences in Alabama (four), California (five) and Florida (five) accounted for almost two thirds of the total.

For the first time, the total number of people recorded to be under sentence of death in the USA at the end of 2025 was lower than 2,000, as a result of commutations and deaths by natural causes.

[20] The Tennessean, "Tennessee has paid $600,000 for lethal injection drugs, but specific details remain secret", 20 March 2025, https://eu.tennessean.com/story/news/crime/2025/03/20/tennessee-death-row-lethal-injection-pentobarbital/82517783007/

THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE USA

As of the end of 2025, 23 US states had abolished this punishment for all crimes, including 11 since the beginning of the millennium.[21]

Of the 27 remaining states, California, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Wyoming (10, or 37% of all states that retained the death penalty in law) had not carried out executions for at least 10 years. Of these, California, Oregon and Pennsylvania continued to observe governor-ordered moratoriums on executions.

No executions were recorded at the federal level. Under the first Trump administration, executions resumed with 13 death sentences carried out between July 2020 and January 2021, after a 17-year hiatus. At the end of his mandate, in late 2024 President Biden commuted 37 out of 40 death sentences imposed under federal law. US military authorities had not carried out any executions since 1961.

Outside the USA, **Trinidad and Tobago** was the only country in the region known to have sentenced people to death in 2025 (one death sentence in total).

Eight other countries that still retain the death penalty for ordinary crimes– Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia – did not hold anyone under sentence of death and did not impose any new death sentences. Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continued to hold one person each under sentence of death, but their death sentences could not be implemented due to judicial standards applying in both countries prohibiting the implementation of a death sentence after five years since its imposition.[22]

Trinidad and Tobago remained the only country in the region to retain the mandatory death penalty for murder, holding 58% of the 65 people known to be under sentence of death in the region outside the USA. Out of the 38 people reported on death row in Trinidad and Tobago, 20 had been under sentences of death for more than five years and therefore their death sentence could not be implemented.[23]

The resentencing process established in **Barbados** following the abolition of the mandatory death penalty in 2018 continued.[24] One man was resentenced to imprisonment for 1,859 days, taking into account time already served and delay in the resentencing process, in October.[25] Information received by Amnesty International indicated that another man who had been appealing his death sentence when the law was amended, had his resentencing pending at the end of the year.

The governments of **Grenada** and **Guyana** stated their intentions to initiate consultations on the abolition of the death penalty during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) that their countries underwent in May 2025. Recognizing the significance of the issue and the need for inclusive national dialogue, the government of Grenada said that it intended to initiate public consultations.[26] The delegation of Guyana noted that the death penalty would be addressed as part of the work of the Constitutional Reform Commission through nationwide consultations.[27]

Throughout 2025, the ad hoc Sectoral Commission established by the government of **Peru** in late 2024 conducted hearings across the country on proposals to expand the application of the death penalty to punish rape of children.[28] While acknowledging existing concerns on the perceived effectiveness of the death penalty, the Sectoral Commission recommended the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights to consider constitutional reforms to allow for the introduction of the death penalty for the rape of children; and to render

[21] The states of Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Virginia and Washington. The District of Columbia has also abolished the death penalty.
[22] In line with the standard set by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in *Pratt and Morgan v. The Attorney General of Jamaica* (UKPC 37) (1993).
[23] Trinidad Express, "PM: Hangings can't happen at this time", 16 May 2025, https://trinidadexpress.com/news/local/pm-hangings-can-t-happen-at-this-time/article_ba89fc65-273e-4daa-830f-7c3d97971195.html
[24] Caribbean Court of Justice, *Jabari Sensimania Nervais v. The Queen* and *Dwayne Omar Severin v. The Queen* (CCJ 19 (AJ)), 2018.
[25] Supreme Court of Barbados, High Court Criminal Division, *Tyrone Dacosta Cadogan v. The Queen*, CRMA0016 of 2005, delivered on 31 October 2025.
[26] Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Grenada, UN Doc. A/HRC/60/14, 2 July 2025, para.60.
[27] Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Guyana, UN Doc. A/HRC/60/16, 24 June 2025, para.51.
[28] The Sectoral Commission was established through Ministerial Resolution No. 0319-2024-JUS of 14 December 2024.

extortion and "urban terrorism" chargeable as "treason", which is an offence already punishable by death under Article 140 of the Constitution. In the lead-up to the 2026 general elections, at least four political parties explicitly proposed the implementation of the death penalty and to withdraw from the American Convention on Human Rights in order to apply this cruel punishment.

In a rare move, in July the Director of Public Prosecution in **Saint Kitts and Nevis** requested the death penalty to be imposed on a man on trial for murder. However, on 25 September, the Director of Public Prosecutions withdrew the request, stating that "the death penalty risks undermining goodwill, jeopardising funding, and constraining the technical cooperation that our justice system presently benefits from and expects to continue receiving. […] I have determined that it is not in the wider public interest to maintain the capital designation."[29]

On the day of the inauguration of his second term in office, President Donald Trump of the **USA** signed the first of two executive orders advocating for an increased use of the death penalty to protect people "from violent rapists, murderers, and monsters" and promising help to "preserve capital punishment in the States".[30] The order set the path for the work of his administration on criminal justice; and an inflammatory tone that dominated public debates on crime and justice across the nation throughout the year.

US Attorney General, Pam Bondi, followed suit by issuing a memorandum to all Department of Justice employees indicating that the moratorium on executions established under the Biden administration was lifted with immediate effect; and instructing federal prosecutors to seek the death penalty in all possible cases.[31] She continued by authorizing the transfer on 1 March of John Hanson to Oklahoma, where he had been sentenced to death under state statutes. John Hanson was serving a sentence of life imprisonment in a federal facility and the Biden administration had refused the transfer. The state Attorney General, Gentner Drummond, requested the transfer on the same day that the first presidential executive order was issued and repeatedly acknowledged the role of the Trump administration in facilitating the execution.[32] The lawyers of John Hanson learned of the transfer only after it had been completed.[33]

The 2025 directives issued by President Trump on the death penalty further contributed to the spread of inaccurate or misleading information on crime that had a ripple-effect across the country, falsely portraying the death penalty as having a unique deterrent effect. The Governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis, whose final term ends in January 2027, was among other officials that fostered this flawed perception of the death penalty and publicly linked the unprecedented number of executions that he authorized to delivering justice and deterring crime.[34]

Several US states adopted legislative amendments to facilitate or expand the use of the death penalty. In its yearly report, the Death Penalty Information Centre reported 17 bills enacted across eight states, double the amount of 2024.[35] State officials amended execution protocols in Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, and North Carolina; while the authorities of Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas authorized secrecy bills in relation to information or conduct of the executions. Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, and Oklahoma further expanded the list of crimes or circumstances that could attract the death penalty.[36]

More positively, the authorities of Georgia amended legislation to strengthen protections for those facing the death penalty, including for people with intellectual disabilities, bringing the legal standard in this state in line with that followed nationwide.[37] In California, a bill was enacted to prohibit the imposition of the death

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[29] Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, High Court of Justice, in the Federation of St. Christopher & Nevis, *Director of Public Prosecutions v. Trevern Edwards*, Case SKNHCR 2023/0067 & 0071 - joined, para.2, https://www.eccourts.org/judgment/director-of-public-prosecutions-v-trevern-edwards

[30] The White House, "Restoring the death penalty and protecting public safety", 20 January 2025, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-the-death-penalty-and-protecting-public-safety/; The White House, "Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Directs the Enforcement of Death Penalty Laws in the District of Columbia", 25 September 2025, https://www.whitehouse.gov/factsheets/2025/09/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-directs-the-enforcement-of-death-penalty-laws-in-the-district-of-columbia/

[31] Among other examples, Office of the Attorney General, Memorandum for all department employees of 5 February 2025, https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1388561/dl

[32] Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond, "Convicted killer transferred to Oklahoma from Louisiana to face death sentence", 2 March 2025, https://oklahoma.gov/oag/news/newsroom/2025/march/convicted-killer-transferred-to-oklahoma-from-louisiana-to-face-death-sentence.html

[33] Amnesty International, USA: State set to execute federal transferee: John Hanson (AMR 51/9425/2025), 22 May 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr51/9425/2025/en/

[34] WUSF, "Gov. Ron DeSantis says executions are about justice amid modern-era record", 4 November 2025, https://www.wusf.org/politics-issues/2025-11-04/gov-desantis-says-executions-about-justice-amid-modern-era-record

[35] Death Penalty Information Centre, "The Death Penalty in 2025", December 2025, https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/research/analysis/reports/year-end-reports/the-death-penalty-in-2025

[36] For an overview of all measure, see Death Penalty Information Center, "The Death Penalty in 2025 – Legislation", https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/research/analysis/reports/year-end-reports/the-death-penalty-in-2025/legislation

[37] Georgia General Assembly, HB 123, Session 2025-2026, https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/69497

penalty in cases where violations of the prohibition against discrimination under the Racial Justice Act have been found.[38]

Amnesty International continued to document violations of human rights in several cases of people facing executions in the USA. Among other examples, David Roberts came close to execution in Alabama on 21 August despite having been diagnosed by prison doctors with paranoid schizophrenia, with severe symptoms including psychosis, delusions and hallucinations. A state court judge ordered a temporary stay of execution pending a psychiatric evaluation after his lawyers filed a motion that he is not competent to face execution.[39] In Missouri, legal concerns and evidence of jury misconduct, inadequately challenged by the trial defence lawyer, affected the case of Lance Shockley, executed in October.[40]

On 28 February, the Governor of Alabama Kay Ivey granted clemency to Rocky Myers and commuted his death sentence.[41] He was the first man and first Black person on death row to receive clemency in Alabama since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. Rocky Myers, who has an intellectual disability, spent more than 30 years on death row, convicted by a nearly all-white jury which sentenced him to life without the possibility of parole for the murder of his white neighbor. The trial judge overrode their decision and imposed a death sentence—a practice now outlawed in Alabama. No evidence linked him to the murder scene and key testimonies against him were tainted by inconsistencies and allegations of police pressure. His assigned lawyer for post-conviction appeals abandoned his case without notice, making him miss key appeal deadlines.[42] The state had begun the process of setting his execution when the clemency request was considered.

Executions in Ohio remained on hold. Governor Mike DeWine continued to issue reprieves "due to ongoing problems involving the willingness of pharmaceutical suppliers to provide drugs to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC), pursuant to DRC protocol, without endangering other Ohioans."[43]

Five men continued to face capital prosecution before unfair military commissions at the US naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.[44]

According to figures from the Death Penalty Information Center, one man was formally exonerated from death row in Ohio after charges against him were dismissed due to prosecutorial misconduct.[45] The total number of exonerations recorded since 1973 was brought to 202.[46]

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[38] California Legislative Information, AB-1071 Criminal procedure: discrimination, https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1071&search_keywords=%22death+penalty%22
[39] Amnesty International, USA: Further Information: Alabama stay of execution holds: David Roberts (AMR 51/0249/2025), 2 September 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr51/0249/2025/en/
[40] Amnesty International, USA: Missouri conducts its first execution of 2025 (AMR 51/0403/2025), 15 October 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr51/0403/2025/en/
[41] Amnesty International USA, "Commuting Death Sentence Is Step Toward Justice for Rocky Myers", 28 February 2025, https://www.amnestyusa.org/press-releases/commuting-death-sentence-is-step-toward-justice-for-rocky-myers/
[42] Amnesty International, "Rocky Myers: Three decades on Alabama's death row, seeking justice" (ACT 50/4408/2021), 10 July 2021, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/4408/2021/en/
[43] Office of the Governor of Ohio, "Governor DeWine Issues Reprieves", 10 October 2025, https://governor.ohio.gov/media/news-and-media/governor-dewine-issues-reprieves-10-10-2025
[44] Office of Military Commissions Website, Office of Military Commissions Cases, 9/11: Khalid Shaikh Mohammad et al. (2) and USS Cole: Abd al-Rahim Hussein Muhammed Abdu Al-Nashiri (2). Among the five defendants in the 9/11 case, Ramzi Bin al Shibh was found unfit to stand trial in 2023.
[45] Death Penalty Information Center, "Ohio Prosecutors Dismiss Case Against Elwood Jones Nearly 30 Year After Wrongful Conviction", 17 December 2025, https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/ohio-prosecutors-dismiss-case-against-elwood-jones-nearly-30-year-after-wrongful-conviction
[46] Death Penalty Information Center, Innocence Database, available at https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/facts-and-research/data/innocence

ASIA-PACIFIC

REGIONAL TRENDS

- Amnesty International continues to consider China as the world's lead executioner, with thousands of people believed to have been sentenced to death and executed, as the authorities continued to use the death penalty to send a political message.
- Executions resumed in Japan and Taiwan after a hiatus; the government of Singapore almost doubled its yearly execution total compared to 2024.
- The authorities of Viet Nam abolished the death penalty for eight offences.

COUNTRY	2025 RECORDED EXECUTIONS	2025 RECORDED DEATH SENTENCES	PEOPLE KNOWN TO BE UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH AT THE END OF 2025
Afghanistan	6	+	+
Bangladesh	0	185+	2,000+
Brunei Darussalam	0	0	+
China	+	+	+
India[47]	0	128	574
Indonesia	0	68+	500[48]
Japan	1	1	110[49]
Laos	0	6+	+
Malaysia	0	15	97[50]
Maldives	0	3	20
Myanmar	0	6+	+
North Korea	+	+	+
Pakistan	0	68+	3,221[51]
Singapore	17	2	30+
South Korea	0	0	57[52]
Sri Lanka	0	49+	826[53]
Taiwan	1	2	42[54]

[47] The Square Circle Clinic, "Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics Report 2025", February 2026, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JFjVA_Zg8IFSYMZ9Ey7B5lxV2N7w8dIl/view
[48] Antara, "Govt drafting new law as 500 inmates await execution: official", 31 October 2025, https://en.antaranews.com/news/389297/govt-drafting-new-law-as-500-inmates-await-execution-official
[49] Of which 105 had their death sentences upheld by the Supreme Court.
[50] As of 13 November 2025.
[51] Based on research by Justice Project Pakistan.
[52] This figure includes only individuals with confirmed death sentences. Four were convicted under military law.
[53] As of October 2025.
[54] Including 36 with their death sentences upheld by the Supreme Court.

COUNTRY	2025 RECORDED EXECUTIONS	2025 RECORDED DEATH SENTENCES	PEOPLE KNOWN TO BE UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH AT THE END OF 2025
Thailand	0	119	429
Tonga	0	0	0
Viet Nam	+	138+	1,200+

The Asia-Pacific region continued to hold the highest number of executions in the world, but secrecy and restrictive state practices continued to prevent scrutiny and an informed assessment of trends in several countries. Despite recorded setbacks, executions continued to be confined to a small group of countries – seven, an increase from five in 2024.

Figures on the use of the death penalty remained classified as a state secret in China and Viet Nam; and access to information on North Korea remained significantly restricted, rendering figures for the region and globally vastly underestimated.

Amnesty International recorded an alarming increase in executions in Singapore, where the authorities nearly doubled their yearly figure from 9 in 2024 to 17 in 2025. The governments of Japan and Taiwan resumed executions, carrying out one each.

At least 796 new death sentences were known to have been imposed in the region. This figure remained similar to that of previous years (at least 948 in 2023 and 843 in 2024). Death sentences were known to have been imposed in 17 countries, with the courts of the Maldives and Taiwan sentencing people to death in 2025, while they did not do so in 2024.

Amnesty International documented that in several countries the death penalty was imposed after unfair proceedings; as the mandatory sentence; and to punish drug-related and other offences that do not meet the threshold of the "most serious crimes" (intentional killing) to which the imposition of the death penalty must be restricted under international law and standards. In some countries, the death penalty was also applied for acts that do not constitute a recognizable criminal offence complying with requirements under international human rights law, such as "blasphemy".

The authorities of Viet Nam lowered the number of offences punishable by death to ten offences, repealing this cruel punishment for eight. At the opposite end, legislative measures expanded the scope of the death penalty in the Maldives and Myanmar.

Figures published by the Taliban de-facto authorities in **Afghanistan** indicated that six men were executed.[55] All executions were reported during the year to have been carried out in public. At least one death sentence was imposed for "blasphemy".

Amnesty International recorded 185 new death sentences in **Bangladesh**, including 2 for drug-related offences; 13 for rape; and 168 for offences involving intentional killing. Thirty-three of these were imposed without the defendant being present, including against the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, convicted by the International Crimes Tribunal in relation to violations and allegations of crimes against humanity that took place during the student-led protests in July and August 2024.[56] Four women were known to have been sentenced to death. The transitional government adopted in November 2025 the Prevention, Remedy, and Protection against Enforced Disappearance Ordinance, introducing the discretionary death penalty for those found guilty of enforced disappearances when resulting in death.[57]

Figures on the use of the death penalty in **China** continued to be classified as a state secret. Based on its monitoring, Amnesty International believes that thousands of people continued to be sentenced to death and executed for various offences, including several that do not meet the threshold of the "most serious crimes"

[55] Afghanistan International, "Taliban Executed Six People, Flogged More Than 1,100 In 2025", 1 January 2026, https://www.afintl.com/en/202601019646

[56] Amnesty International, "Bangladesh: Justice for victims of 2024 massacre not served by death sentence against Sheikh Hasina", 17 November 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/11/bangladesh-justice-for-victims-of-2024-massacre-not-served-by-death-sentence-against-sheikh-hasina/

[57] The Business Standard, "Bangladesh promulgates ordinance with death penalty for enforced disappearances", 2 December 2025, https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/bangladesh-promulgates-ordinance-death-penalty-enforced-disappearances-1300191 The Ordinance was not adopted by Parliament before the end of the year.

set out under international law and standards. Disclosures and commentary by the authorities continued to point to intentional use of the death penalty to send a political message that the state will not tolerate threats to public security or stability, and that is willing to impose severe punishment to maintain the social order.

The Chinese authorities published information in state media on cases of capital punishment to show the severity of punishment for crimes that were "extremely serious", including when the crimes involved children;[58] or women murdered by their husbands.[59] As in previous years, reporting on drug-related cases was given prominence in the lead-up to 26 June, the UN-designated World Drug Day, with several provincial-level courts issuing guidance for the "efficient and effective" handling of "typical cases".[60] Also in connection to World Drug Day, the Supreme People's Court separately identified ten cases as examples to set principles for punishment in drug cases, indicating that the death penalty was appropriate in three of those because of the large quantity of drugs trafficked and the presence of other aggravating circumstances, such as the prior commission of an offence; in cases where children were involved; and to demonstrate a "strong stance" against medical professionals who sold drugs not for the purpose of medical treatment.[61]

The death penalty also featured prominently in the drive of the authorities to tackle corruption in the financial sector and show a "zero tolerance" approach against those found guilty of abusing their position for personal gain. Bai Tianhui, former general manager of China Huarong International Holdings Limited, was executed for taking large amounts of bribes, crimes which the Supreme People's Court found to have had "an extremely adverse social impact and caused great damage to the interests of the state and the people".[62] Amnesty International recorded a significant increase in the number of new death sentences imposed for bribery and other financial offences that were publicly disseminated, from seven in 2024 to 18 in 2025. The 18 death sentences allowed for the possibility of commutation after two years (suspended death sentences); and were imposed on several former state officials, as well as executives of state-owned companies. In late November, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate jointly issued guidance for lower courts "aiming to educate, warn and deter those engaged in the financial industry, while underscoring their determination to combat financial corruption through legal means".[63]

In other instances, the death penalty gained prominence in China's relations with some foreign governments. In a rare announcement on 19 March, the Ministry of State Security disclosed that a man had been sentenced to death after he was convicted of espionage for selling classified information to foreign intelligence agencies.[64] On the same day, the Department of Global Affairs of Canada indicated that four dual nationals of China and Canada had been executed in secret for drug-related offences earlier in 2025, among continued tensions between the two countries.[65] On 17 and 22 April, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Japanese embassy in Beijing of the executions of two men found guilty of two separate attacks on three Japanese nationals, a woman and two children, which had been the focus of exchanges between the two countries.[66]

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[58] Global Times, "Chinese man executed for knife attack leading to 8 deaths, 17 injuries at vocational school in E.China", 20 January 2025, https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202501/1327226.shtml; China Daily, "Three rapists executed for sexual abuse on minors", 16 May 2025, https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202505/16/WS6826fb25a310a04af22bfe3e.html; Xinhua, "Chinese court upholds death penalty for man convicted of trafficking children", 21 January 2025, https://english.news.cn/20250121/859e116b845d4c46877017423072c1a1/c.html; China Daily, "Four defendants sentenced in infant kidnapping case", 19 September 2025, https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202509/19/WS68cd1dd3a3108622abca1cc9.html

[59] China Daily, "Hebei man sentenced to death for murdering his wife", 9 December 2025, https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202512/09/WS69379efca310d6866eb2dab8.html; "Shaanxi court gives death penalty with reprieve to man who killed his wife", 12 December 2025, https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202512/12/WS693bbc96a310d6866eb2e54d.html

[60] Guangdong High Court, "广东法院依法严惩毒品犯罪典型案例" (Typical cases of Guangdong courts severely punishing drug crimes in accordance with the law), 25 June 2025, https://www.gdcourts.gov.cn/gsxx/quanweifabu/anlihuicui/content/post_1843384.htmlYangtze; Evening Post, "贩卖"冰毒"5000余克，毒贩被执行死刑" (A drug trafficker who sold over 5,000 grams of methamphetamine was executed), 26 June 2025, https://www.yzwb.net/news/sh/202506/t20250626_227639.html; People's Daily Online, "貴州兩起特大毒品案主犯被執行死刑" (The main culprits in two major drug trafficking cases in Guizhou were executed), 25 June 2025, http://gz.people.com.cn/BIG5/n2/2025/0625/c361324-41271288.html; https://www.guancha.cn/politics/2025_06_24_780552.shtml

[61] Supreme People's Court, "人民法院依法严惩毒品犯罪典型案例"(Typical Cases of People's Courts Severely Punishing Drug Crimes According to Law), 23 June 2025, https://www.court.gov.cn/zixun/xiangqing/468721.html

[62] Xinhua, "Former executive of Chinese financial firm executed for bribery", 9 December 2025, https://english.news.cn/20251209/dd2dce40bad14d5cb88d1f0c38fb9a3f/c.html

[63] The Supreme People's Procuratorate of the People's Republic of China, "Crackdown seeks to curb financial fraud", 15 December 2025, https://en.spp.gov.cn/2025-12/15/c_1147823.htm

[64] Global Times, "Researcher sentenced to death for selling state secrets after resignation: Ministry of State Security", 19 March 2025, https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202503/1330391.shtml

[65] The Globe and Mail, "Four Canadians executed by China after drug-related convictions, Joly says", 19 March 2025, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-ottawa-strongly-condemns-executions-of-canadians-by-china/

[66] Asahi Shimbun, "Man put to death for knife attack at Japanese school bus stop", 18 April 2025, https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/15715527; BBC News, "China executes man who stabbed Japanese school boy", 22 April 2025, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c2kv93y4289o

Efforts to end telecom fraud led to the group trials of scores of members of crime syndicates operating between China and Myanmar, accused of offences including murder and fraud. The Wenzhou Intermediate People's Court in East China's Zhejiang province sentenced 16 members of a syndicate to death, including five to "suspended" death sentences in September;[67] and the Shenzhen Intermediate People's Court in Guangdong province sentenced to death seven members of another group, including two to "suspended" death sentences, in November.[68]

Figures from the Square Circle Clinic indicated that 128 people, including 10 women, were sentenced to death in **India**.[69] Two death sentences were imposed on people convicted of the rape of a child. One man had his mercy petition rejected. The number of people under sentence of death (574) was the highest recorded since 2016.

Amnesty International recorded that 68 new death sentences were imposed in **Indonesia**, including 56 for drug-related offences and 12 for murder. The Ministry of Law proposed a bill on the Procedure for the Implementation of the Death Penalty to regulate the implementation of the new Criminal Code, effective from 2026. Among other points, the bill introduces lethal injection or the electric chair, in addition to the existing method by firing squad; and provides the framework for decision that executions may be carried out, in cases where the clemency request has been rejected and if the individual does not show potential for rehabilitation or good conduct, after the conclusion of the newly-established 10 year probationary period after confirmation of the death sentence.[70] Several foreign nationals under sentence of death in Indonesia were transferred to their country of origin, following diplomatic agreements.

After a hiatus of nearly three years, the authorities of **Japan** executed a man on 27 June 2025. He had been convicted of murder.[71] This was the first execution carried out following the 2024 acquittal of Hakamada Iwao, who had been on death row since 1968 and whose case drew international attention due to the evidence of violations of the right to a fair trial.[72] One man was known to have been sentenced to death, while two others had their death sentences confirmed by the Supreme Court. Two men held on death row died of natural causes.

Official figures received by Amnesty International indicated that the courts of peninsular **Malaysia** sentenced 15 men to death during the year, including seven convicted of drug related offences and two foreign nationals. No death sentences were reported in Sabah and Sarawak. The overall total represented a decrease by one third compared to 2024, when 24 new death sentences were imposed, including nine for drug-related offences. The Court of Appeal upheld three death sentences, all on men convicted of murder, including two foreign nationals, while commuting 42 others, including 24 drug-related. Four people were acquitted by this Court.

As of 11 November 2025, 97 individuals remained on death row in Malaysia, according to data from the Prisons Department reported to Parliament. Of these, 38 were awaiting appeal before the Court of Appeal, nine before the Federal Court, and 50 had exhausted all appeals.[73] The Government announced that the official moratorium on executions remained in place; and that it was in the process of establishing a Working Group to study the "policy and direction of the death penalty in Malaysia", alongside the Malaysian Criminal Law Reform Committee. The study was expected to be completed in January 2026 and the results presented to the Government.[74]

On 6 December, the President of the **Maldives** ratified legislative amendments to the Drugs Act to introduce the death penalty as punishment — subject to a unanimous decision of the Supreme Court bench — for the importation of more than 350 grams of cannabis, 250 grams of diamorphine (heroin), or 100 grams of other specified drugs. The amendments also removed the possibility of commuting such sentences through

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[67] China Daily, "China court sentences 11 members of notorious family crime syndicate to death for telecom fraud and murder", 29 September 2025, https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202509/29/WS68da4b86a310f735438b2faa.html
[68] China Daily, "Syndicate members sentenced for killings and telecom fraud", 5 November 2025, https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202511/05/WS690a83daa310f215074b8f79.html
[69] The Square Circle Clinic, "Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics Report 2025", February 2026, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JFjVA_Zg8IFSYMZ9Ey7B5lxV2N7w8dIl/view
[70] Ministry of Law of the Republic of Indonesia, "The Death Penalty Bill is Based on Human Rights Principles", 8 October 2025, https://kemenkum.go.id/english-language-news/ruu-pidana-mati-berlandaskan-prinsip-ham The bill came into force in January 2026 as Law Number 1 of 2026.
[71] Amnesty International, "Japan: Cruel execution a stain on country's human rights record", 27 June 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/06/japan-cruel-execution-a-stain-on-countrys-human-rights-record/
[72] Amnesty International, "Japan: Acquittal of man who spent 45 years on death row pivotal moment for justice", 26 September 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/09/japan-acquittal-of-man-who-spent-45-years-on-death-row-pivotal-moment-for-justice/
[73] The Star, "Government to conduct in-depth study on abolishing death penalty starting January 2026", 13 November 2025, https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2025/11/13/government-to-conduct-in-depth-study-on-abolishing-death-penalty-starting-january-2026
[74] Parliament of Malaysia, Fifteenth Parliament, Third session, Fourth Term, Written question no.38, 19 November 2025. The study had not been concluded at the time of publication of this report.

clemency and barred plea agreements.[75] In its national report for the country's Universal Periodic Review before the UN Human Rights Council, the government confirmed that all death sentences imposed on those who were below 18 years of age when the crime was committed had been commuted.[76]

On 28 July, the State Administration Council of the military authorities of **Myanmar** enacted Law No. 44/2025 on "Military Secrets Preservation and Protection Law". Under the law, the death penalty is listed as the discretionary punishment for current or former defence personnel or anyone found guilty of performing tasks or using any military secret for a foreign country or military organization without authorization. On 29 July, the State Administration Council (SAC) enacted Law No. 48/2025 "Law on Protecting Multi-Party Democratic General Elections from Obstruction, Hindrance, and Destruction" under Section 419 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The stated aim of the law was to prevent interference in the electoral campaign and process in 2025. Section 27 provides for the mandatory death penalty to punish offences under this law when they result in death.[77] Six new death sentences were recorded, five imposed by district courts under military authorities for murder and one by a military court on a former official for treason.

Amnesty International's monitoring of the use of the death penalty in **North Korea** continued to be hampered by lack of transparency and of independent media sources, as well as restrictions to visiting the country, which made it once again impossible for the organization to verify information. Foreign media reported several executions being carried out, including for acts that either did not meet the threshold of the "most serious crimes" to which the use of the death penalty must be restricted under international law or which did not constitute recognizable criminal offences complying with international human rights law.[78]

Reports indicated that on 15 February the Supreme Court issued directives to the Ministry of Social Security and the Ministry of State Security to strengthen judicial oversight of the execution process, reportedly to centralize control over the executions.[79]

Of the 68 new death sentences recorded by Amnesty International in **Pakistan**, 56 were imposed for offences involving murder; 11 for "blasphemy"; and one for rape. One woman was among those known to have been sentenced to death. Anti-terrorism courts sentenced six men to death for murder.

The authorities of **Singapore** carried out the highest number of executions in the country since 2003, when 19 people were hanged (see figure 2, below); and nearly doubled its yearly total of 2024 (9). Out of the 17 executions of 2025, two were carried out for murder, three for instigating drug trafficking and 12 for drug trafficking.[80] All executions related to mandatory death sentences and involved five Malaysian and 12 Singaporean nationals. At least three men had been found by the judge to have been "couriers", but were not entitled to sentencing discretion as the prosecution did not issue them with a certificate of substantive assistance in disrupting drug trafficking activities.[81]

On 14 August, the President of Singapore, Tharman Shanmugaratnam, acting on advice from the Cabinet, commuted the death sentence of a 33-year-old man from Singapore, reducing it to life imprisonment. This was the first clemency granted in a death penalty case in close to 30 years.[82]

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[75] Amnesty International, "Maldives: ADPAN and partner human rights organizations denounce the expansion of the death penalty for drug offences (Joint statement, ACT 50/0383/2025)", 10 December 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/0383/2025/en/. The amendments came into effect on 7 March 2026.

[76] Human Rights Council- Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21- Maldives, UN Doc. A/HRC/WG.6/50/MDV/1, 21 August 2025, para.68.

[77] Yangon Media Group, "Myanmar Enacts Election Protection Law Carrying Death Penalty", 29 July 2025, https://yangonmediagroup.com/index.php/eng-section/myanmar-enacts-election-protection-law?utm; The Irrawaddy, "Myanmar Junta Imposes Death Sentence to Crush Election Dissent", 30 July 2025, https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/myanmar-junta-imposes-death-sentence-to-crush-election-dissent.html

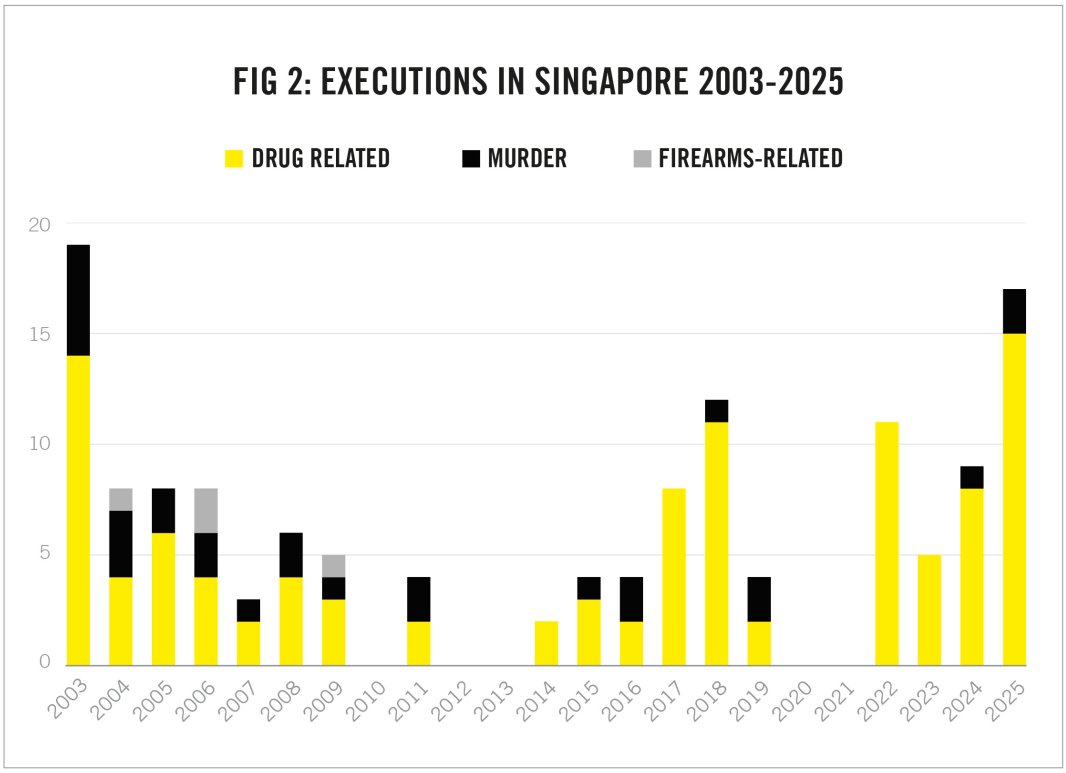
[78] Among other examples, The Korea Herald, "Death penalty for saying 'oppa'? N. Korea strengthens law to curb 'anti-socialist culture'", 30 May 2025, https://www.koreaherald.com/article/10499631; The Economic Times, "Four North Korean officials arrested over failed warship launch in front of Kim Jong Un, face imminent execution", 30 May 2025, https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/us/four-north-korean-officials-arrested-over-failed-warship-launch-in-front-of-kim-jong-un-face-imminent-execution/articleshow/121498432.cms?from=mdr

[79] Daily NK, "N. Korea tightens central control over executions with new supreme court directives", 5 March 2025, https://www.dailynk.com/english/north-korea-tightens-central-control-executions-new-supreme-court-directives/

[80] Singapore Prison Service, "SPS and YRSG Annual Statistics Release for 2025", https://www.sps.gov.sg/files/media%20releases/Press_Release___SPS_YRSG_Annual_Statistics_Release_for_2025.pdf; press releases issued during the year by the Singapore Police Force and the Singapore Central Narcotics Bureau.

[81] For more information on the requirements needed to avoid the mandatory death penalty in Singapore, see Amnesty International, Singapore: Cooperate or die: Singapore's flawed reforms to the mandatory death penalty (ACT 50/7158/2017), October 2017, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/7158/2017/en/

[82] Amnesty International, "Singapore: Call for death penalty moratorium renewed after first clemency since 1998 and third execution in three weeks -Joint statement"(ACT 50/0218/2025), 22 August 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/0218/2025/en/



Although the prosecution sought the death penalty in several cases, no new death sentences were imposed in **South Korea** for the second consecutive year. In June, the Supreme Court of South Korea confirmed the not guilty verdict imposed by a lower court during the posthumous retrial of Oh Gyeong-mu, on the ground that the original conviction had relied on a forced "confession" extracted through torture. He had been convicted of espionage under the National Security Act and the now-abrogated Anti-Communism Act, and executed in 1967.[83]

Of the 49 new death sentences recorded in **Sri Lanka,** seven were imposed for drug-related offences. The Commissioner General of Prisons, Jagath Weerasinghe, was reported as indicating that 805 men and 21 women were under sentence of death as of October.[84]

On 16 January, the authorities of **Taiwan** carried out the first execution in the country since 2020. Huang Linkai, who was convicted of rape and two murders, was given notice of the set execution only a few hours in advance and was not given the possibility of any last family visits.[85] The execution was carried out in violation of international safeguards on the death penalty. The Ministry of Justice ordered the execution while the Prosecutor General had not filed an extraordinary appeal on his behalf, as allowed under the Constitutional Court in its 2024 landmark decision enhancing safeguards in death penalty cases.[86] Moreover, two of the requirements set out for death penalty cases by the Constitutional Court in 2024 were not met: his lawyer had not received information confirming that the decision to sentence him to death had been unanimous, and a pre-sentencing social investigation was not conducted.[87] His lawyer urgently filed a constitutional petition and retrial petition on the evening of the execution; however, the Ministry of Justice proceeded with the execution as planned.

Two new death sentences were imposed for murder.

Official figures provided to Amnesty International indicated that in 2025 the courts of first instance of **Thailand** imposed 119 new death sentences, including on 17 women and seven foreign nationals. As of 31

[83] The Korea Herald, "Man's wrongful spy charges overturned, 58 years after execution", 25 June 2025, https://www.koreaherald.com/article/10517543
[84] News 1st, "Commissioner General of Prisons Calls for Death Penalty for Major Drug Traffickers", 23 October 2025, https://english.newsfirst.lk/2025/10/23/commissioner-general-of-prisons-calls-for-death-penalty-for-major-drug-traffickers
[85] Amnesty International, "Taiwan: First execution since 2020 a shameful setback", 16 January 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/01/taiwan-first-execution-since-2020-a-shameful-setback/
[86] Taiwan Constitutional Court, Judgment 113-Hsien-Pan-8 (2024), delivered on 20 September 2024.
[87] Taiwan Constitutional Court, Judgment 113-Hsien-Pan-8 (2024), delivered on 20 September 2024.

December, 429 people remained under sentence of death, including 53 women and 15 people with their death sentences confirmed by the Supreme Court. Out of the total, 313 (73%), were convicted of drug related offences. The number of women held under sentence of death continued to be significantly higher for drug-related offences (52, or 98%) than for other crime (1).

The authorities of Viet Nam continued to conceal information on the execution of criminal judgments as a state secret, despite new amendments to the Law on Protection of State Secrets.[88] Of the 138 death sentences recorded by Amnesty International, 100 were imposed for drug related offences, including three on women and four on foreign nationals.

Effective from 1 July, legislative amendments to the Penal Code reduced the number of capital offences from 18 to 10, abolishing this punishment for committing activities aimed at overthrowing the people's government (Article 109); espionage (Article 110); sabotage of the material and technical infrastructure of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Article 114); production and trading of counterfeit medicines (Article 194); illegal transportation of narcotics (Article 250); embezzlement of property (Article 353); receiving bribes (Article 354); and disrupting peace and waging aggressive war (Article 421).[89]

Further legislative and judicial guidance published in the second half of the year aimed at clarifying the circumstances in which death sentences can be commuted, to include the crimes for which the death penalty was repealed, as well as death sentences imposed on pregnant women or women raising children under 36 months old; people aged 75 years or older; people with terminal cancer; those found guilty of drug production and trafficking under certain amounts and if the perpetrator did not have a role in organizing the trade or does not have two or more aggravating circumstances; and those receiving commutations from the President.[90] Other circulars regulated the treatment of those on death row, to regulate access to books, newspapers, documentation and technology; and to facilitate executions in cases that no judicial or clemency appeals are pending when executions are set.[91]

[88] Law No. 117/2025/QH, effective from 1 March 2026.
[89] Law No. 86/2025/QH15, effective from 1 July 2025.
[90] Resolution 03/2025/NQ-HĐTP of the Council of Judges of the Supreme People's Court, effective from 1 November 2025.
[91] Joint Circular 02/2025/TTLT-TANDTC-VKSNDTC-BCA-BQP of the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuracy, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of National Defense, effective from 15 November 2025.

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

REGIONAL TRENDS

- No death sentences or executions were recorded in Europe and Central Asia.
- Russia and Tajikistan continued to observe moratoriums on executions.
- The Kyrgyz Constitutional Court declared efforts to reintroduce the death penalty in the country unconstitutional.

COUNTRY	2025 RECORDED EXECUTIONS	2025 RECORDED DEATH SENTENCES	PEOPLE KNOWN TO BE UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH AT THE END OF 2025
Belarus	0	0	1+
Russia	0	0	0
Tajikistan	0	0	0

There were no death sentences or executions known in Europe and Central Asia.

In **Belarus**, 2025 was the first year that Amnesty International recorded neither new death sentences nor executions since President Alexander Lukashenko assumed office in 1994. However, Amnesty International was unable to confirm the number of people known to be under sentence of death in the country due to the authorities' implementation of death sentences in strict secrecy and a lack of response to the organization's requests for information.

By the end of the reporting period, the fate and whereabouts of two men whose death sentences were upheld by the Supreme Court in 2020 and 2024, respectively, remained unknown.[92] Based on available information, Amnesty International assesses that at least one person remained under the sentence of death in Belarus at the end of 2025.[93]

Meanwhile, three exiled opposition groups adopted a Memorandum on the Abolition of the Death Penalty on 17 June 2025.[94] The initiative represents the groups' aspired commitment to constitutional and legislative changes toward total abolition in Belarus.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, the Constitutional Court ruled on 10 December that a proposal by the country's President, Sadyr Japarov, to reinstate the death penalty would violate the constitutional right to life and Kyrgyzstan's binding international obligations as a state party to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.[95] The justices further held that the proposals could neither proceed to a referendum nor be implemented and must therefore be abandoned entirely.[96] The decision followed the announcement by the President regarding proposed constitutional amendments to reintroduce the death penalty for crimes against women and children – after the abduction, rape and killing of a 17 year old girl in September 2025 – and a formal request for the Supreme Court to rule on whether the amendments would be legal.[97]

[92] Human Rights Center Viasna, "'Between life and getting shot': the history of the death penalty in Belarus over the past five years", 10 October 2025, https://dp.spring96.org/en/news/118865
[93] See Human Rights Center Viasna, "'Between life and getting shot': the history of the death penalty in Belarus over the past five years", 10 October 2025, https://dp.spring96.org/en/news/118865; Human Rights Center Viasna, "Condemned prisoner's death date revealed more than a year after the execution", 17 February 2023, https://spring96.org/en/news/110810
[94] Council of Europe, "Belarusian democratic forces adopt a memorandum to abolish the death penalty in Belarus", 19 June 2025, https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/belarusian-democratic-forces-adopt-a-memorandum-to-abolish-the-death-penalty-in-belarus-1?utm_source=chatgpt.com
[95] Kaktus Media, Решение Конституционного суда о смертной казни. МИД сделал заявление, 11 December 2025, https://kaktus.media/doc/536857_reshenie_konstitycionnogo_syda_o_smertnoy_kazni._mid_sdelal_zaiavlenie.html
[96] Kaktus Media, Решение Конституционного суда о смертной казни. МИД сделал заявление (previously cited).
[97] Constitution Net, Reinstating the death penalty in the Constitution: Kyrgyzstan at a Constitutional Crossroads, 29 December 2025, https://constitutionnet.org/news/voices/reinstating-death-penalty-constitution-kyrgyzstan-constitutional-crossroads.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

REGIONAL TRENDS

- The Iranian authorities carried out more than 2,000 executions, the highest figure recorded in Iran by Amnesty International since 1981, as the death penalty continued to be used as a tool of fear and repression.
- Executions in Saudi Arabia reached the highest figure on record in any given year, while in Kuwait rose by almost three-fold compared to 2024.
- The authorities of United Arab Emirates (UAE) resumed executions for the first time since 2021.
- Iraq executions were largely on hold as new legislative amendments allowed for review of cases; the Council of Ministers of Lebanon supported a bill to abolish the death penalty.

COUNTRY	2025 RECORDED EXECUTIONS	2025 RECORDED DEATH SENTENCES	PEOPLE KNOWN TO BE UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH AT THE END OF 2025
Algeria	0	11	273+
Bahrain	0	1	26[98]
Egypt	23	492[99]	+
Iran	2,159+[100]	+	+
Iraq	+	79+	8,000+
Israel (Abolitionist for ordinary crimes only)	0	0	0
Jordan	0	6+	200+
Kuwait	17	15	+
Lebanon	0	1	57
Libya	0	13+[101]	+

[98] Bahrain Center for Human Rights, "Statement on the Death Penalty in Bahrain", 10 October 2025, https://bahrainrights.net/?p=137208
[99] Figures for death sentences were provided by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR). Amnesty International also consulted with the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF).
[100] Amnesty International compiled reports of executions in Iran throughout the year, working in close collaboration with the Abdorrahman Boroumand Center, a human rights organization, drawing on a range of sources, which include official reports by the Iranian authorities, as well as reports by human rights organizations based outside of Iran with access to those in detention, the families of executed individuals and other informed sources whose identities and affiliations were withheld for security reasons. The reports were cross-checked to ensure reliability and avoid duplication. These human rights organizations include Baloch Activists Campaign; Haalvsh, a Baluchi human rights organization; Human Rights Activists News Agency; Human Rights in Iran; Iran Human Rights; Kurdistan Human Rights Network; and Kurdpa Human Rights Organization. Amnesty International also received unpublished information from Haalvsh, Iran Human Rights, Human Rights in Iran and Kurdistan Human Rights Network on reports of executions that they investigated in 2025. As part of Amnesty International's methodology in compiling and reviewing reports of executions by these human rights organizations, Amnesty International obtained additional information on their methodology. Similarly to its methodology in compiling and reviewing reports of executions in Iran in 2024 and previous years, given the large-scale of executions in dozens of prisons across the country, Amnesty International is not in a position to independently investigate through primary sources each of the executions reported, but instead compiled and cross-checked information from credible organizations, each of which has access to various sources of information in Iran. In a small number of cases, Amnesty International has documented the executions through direct sources including families and lawyers, and reviewed court verdicts.
[101] The number of death sentences is likely to be significantly higher, as these figures only capture those known to have been imposed in western Libya under the control of the Government of National Unity (GNU). In areas under the de facto control of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces armed group in eastern Libya, military courts issued death sentences in closed trials, inaccessible to the public including the families of the defendants.

COUNTRY	2025 RECORDED EXECUTIONS	2025 RECORDED DEATH SENTENCES	PEOPLE KNOWN TO BE UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH AT THE END OF 2025
Morocco/Western Sahara	0	1	63
Oman	0	0	+
Palestine (State Of)[102]			
Qatar	0	4+	+
Saudi Arabia	356+	+	98+
Syria	0	1+	+
Tunisia	0	18+	165+
United Arab Emirates	3	3	+
Yemen	51+	94+	+

Governments in Middle East and North Africa region used the death penalty as a tool to repress dissent and crackdown on actual or perceived national security threats, amid a resurgence of punitive drug policies and continued violations of safeguards and restrictions to the use of the death penalty set out under international law and standards.

A staggering increase in recorded executions in Iran (2,159) was primarily behind the high-total in the region (from at least 1,442 in 2024 to at least 2,611 in 2025). Several other countries also recorded alarming rises, with the Saudi authorities surpassing in 2025 their record-high figure of 2024 (from at least 345 to at least 356). Executions in Kuwait almost tripled, from six in 2024 to 17; and in Egypt nearly doubled, from 13 to 23. In Yemen, the yearly figure rose by more than a third, from at least 38 to at least 51.

Of the recorded total of 2,611, a staggering 1,240 (47%) executions were for drug-related offences, the imposition of the death penalty for which is prohibited under international law and standards.

The authorities of the UAE carried out the country's first executions since 2021. No executions were recorded in Oman and Syria, where some were carried out in 2024; and in Libya, where the last execution confirmed by Amnesty International took place in 2010. Amnesty International could not confirm if executions were carried out in the State of Palestine.

The number of recorded death sentences reached 743. Most significant variations compared to 2024 were noted in Egypt, where the recorded total rose by more than a third (from at least 365 to at least 492); and in Yemen, with a decrease of 38% (from at least 152 to at least 94). Eight countries were known to have imposed new death sentences for drug-related offences.

Algeria introduced the death penalty for drug-related offences, while Kuwait expanded the scope of circumstances of drug trafficking punishable with death. In Israel, the parliament considered several bills to expand and facilitate the discriminatory use of the death penalty against Palestinians, including through the mandatory death penalty.[103]

All recorded death sentences in **Algeria** were imposed on men convicted of murder. A new law that came into effect in July amended Law No. 04-18 of 25 December 2004 on drug control, to expand the circumstances of drug-related offences that would result in the imposition of the death penalty.[104] The law sets out the death penalty as punishment for transporting, selling, distributing or using drugs if done in the proximity of schools or other educational institutions or, in the case of synthetic drugs, in the proximity of health or social care facilities, or within public institutions or establishments open to the public. Capital

[102] Figures unavailable due to conflict.
[103] Amnesty International, "Israel must immediately halt legislation of discriminatory death penalty bill", 11 November 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/11/israel-must-immediately-halt-legislation-of-discriminatory-death-penalty-bill/; "Israel/OPT: Legislative proposals on death penalty violate international law" (ACT 50/0677/2026), 3 February 2026, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/0677/2026/en/
[104] Law No. 25-03 of 1 July 2025, published in the Official Gazette no.43, https://www.joradp.dz/FTP/jo-francais/2025/F2025043.pdf

punishment is also prescribed in cases of repeat offenders selling to minors, to people with special needs or undergoing drug treatment; as well as when the offence has caused death, has involved the use of a firearm or was committed by a transnational criminal group. Lastly, it is also prescribed when it is likely to cause serious harm to public health, when it aims at undermining national security or at creating a climate of insecurity or when it has been committed for the benefit of a foreign state – raising further concern as to the over broad phrasing of these provisions.

In 2025, thousands of individuals in **Egypt** were referred to trial, including in mass proceedings, on terrorism-related charges, some of which carry the death penalty.

The authorities of **Iran** intensified their use of the death penalty as a tool of political repression and control, fuelling an unprecedented rise in executions. A marked increase was recorded in the aftermath of the 12-day war with Israel in June 2025, with 654 executions recorded from January to June, and 1,505 executions recorded from July to December. The known total of 2,159 executions carried out in 2025 constituted the highest figure on record since 1981.

The death penalty continued to be used to punish individuals who challenged, or were perceived as having challenged, the Islamic Republic of Iran establishment, including during and in the aftermath of the Woman Life Freedom uprising of September-December 2022. At least two protesters were executed after grossly unfair trials before Revolutionary Courts after being convicted of alleged crimes during the Woman Life Freedom protests.[105] According to sources, both men stated that they were tortured to extract forced "confessions"; their complaints were never investigated. In a video of protester Mojahed (Abbas) Kourkouri broadcast on state media, he is filmed "confessing" from a hospital bed with his arm visibly injured.[106] Scores of individuals arrested in connection with protests and actual or perceived dissidents remained under sentence of death.

Under the guise of national security, the Iranian authorities intensified their use of the death penalty in the aftermath of hostilities between Israel and Iran, following Israeli military strikes against Iran in June 2025. Senior officials, including the Head of Judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Eje'i, called for expedited trials and executions for "supporting" or "collaborating" with hostile states, including Israel. Iran's parliament also passed the "Law on Intensifying the Punishment for Espionage and Collaboration with the Zionist Regime and Hostile States Against National Security and Interests" expanding the use of the death penalty, including for vaguely worded national security charges, such as "cooperation with hostile governments" and "espionage", punished by the mandatory death penalty. The bill came into effect on 15 October 2025.[107] Since 13 June 2025, at least 11 men were executed following convictions in grossly unfair trials of charges of spying for Israel.[108]

Arbitrary executions were carried out following grossly unfair trials by Revolutionary Courts, which exercise jurisdiction over national security and drug-related offences. These courts lack independence, operate under the influence of security and intelligence bodies and routinely base convictions and death sentences on torture-tainted forced "confessions". Authorities also used overly broad and vaguely defined charges of "enmity against God" (*moharebeh*), "corruption on earth" (*efsad-e fel-arz*), and "armed rebellion against the state" (*baghi*) – or a combination of these – against suspected dissidents which resulted in 45 recorded executions. Among others, political dissidents Behrouz Ehsani and Mehdi Hassani were arbitrarily executed in secret in June following convictions on charges of "armed rebellion against the state" (*baghi*), "enmity against God" (*moharebeh*) and "corruption on earth" (*efsad-e fel-arz*). They were denied access to their lawyers for nearly two years before a trial that lasted only five minutes and during which they were not allowed to speak in their own defence. Forced "confessions" extracted through beatings, prolonged solitary confinement and threats to further harm the two men and their families were used as evidence to convict them.[109]

Scores of people remained at risk of executions following convictions on charges of "enmity against god", "corruption on earth", and "armed rebellion against the state" as the year ended, including humanitarian aid worker Pakhshan Azizi, from Iran's Kurdish minority, and 67-year-old dissident Zahra Shahbaz Tabari.

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[105] Amnesty International, "Iran: Arbitrary execution of Woman Life Freedom protester after sham trial and torture", 11 June 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/06/iran-arbitrary-execution-of-woman-life-freedom-protester-after-sham-trial-and-torture/
[106] Amnesty International, "Iran: Arbitrary execution of Woman Life Freedom protester after sham trial and torture", 11 June 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/06/iran-arbitrary-execution-of-woman-life-freedom-protester-after-sham-trial-and-torture/
[107] Human Rights Council, Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, UN Doc.A/HRC/61/60 10 March 2026, para.88, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2026-03/a-hrc-61-60-auv.pdf
[108] Amnesty International, "Iran: Growing fears over torture and executions of individuals accused of 'espionage' for Israel", 20 June 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/06/iran-growing-fears-over-torture-and-executions-of-individuals-accused-of-espionage-for-israel/; two other men convicted of these offences were executed before June.
[109] Amnesty International, "Iran: Horrifying secret executions amid mounting political repression", 28 July 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/iran-horrifying-secret-executions-amid-mounting-political-repression/

Close to half of the executions recorded in Iran took place for drug-related offences, with an increase from 505 in 2024 (52% of the total) to 998 in 2025 (46% of the total). The rise reflected a disturbing upward trend recorded since the authorities' resumption in 2021 of a heavily punitive and lethal drug policy in a flawed attempt to stem the use and trafficking of drugs.

The use of the death penalty further disproportionately impacted Iran's oppressed minorities, particularly those belonging to the Kurdish, Baluchi, and Afghan communities. Executions of Baluchis accounted for at least 151 of all executions. The number of Afghan nationals and people of Afghan origin executed in 2025 rose compared to 2024, from 80 to 101. At least 126 people executed in 2025 belonged to the Kurdish ethnic minority.

The authorities executed at least one individual, Mohammad Reza Shihaki, who was a child under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged crime;[110] Amnesty International is concerned that at least another two individuals executed in 2025 may have been under the age of 18 at the time of the crime, while scores of others remained on death row.

Executions in **Iraq** were largely on hold, after the Parliament adopted on 21 January an amendment to the General Amnesty Law (No. 27 of 2016).[111] The law authorizes a judicial committee to review convictions of crimes, expanded to include the offence of "affiliation with/membership of terrorist organizations", committed before January 2025 when based on "confessions" extracted "under coercion", on evidence provided by anonymous informants or on "confessions" provided by third parties. However, Amnesty International received credible information that could not be corroborated against official sources relating to executions carried out in secrecy, without prior notification given to legal representatives and family members.

At least 79 new death sentences were known to have been imposed, a 61% decrease from the recorded 200 of 2024. These included 27 new death sentences imposed under the anti-terrorism law; 35 for drug-related offences; 13 for murder and 1 for committing genocide. Three women were among those sentenced to death, one convicted of murder, one of a terrorism-related offence and one of a drug-related offence.

The authorities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq continued to observe a moratorium on executions. Three of the 79 new death sentences were known to have been imposed for murder in this region.

One woman was among the six people known to have been sentenced to death in **Jordan**. One death sentence was imposed for a terrorism-related offence and five for murder.

One woman and at least six foreign nationals were among those known to have been executed in **Kuwait**. Out of the 17 executions recorded in the country, 14 men and one woman were convicted of murder, while two Iranian men were convicted of drug trafficking. Recorded death sentences, which doubled compared to the known figure of 2024, were imposed for murder (10), drug-related offences (4) and kidnapping (1). Two women and at least six foreign nationals were among those sentenced to death.

On 14 December, Decree-Law No. 159 of 2025 on combating drugs and psychotropic substances came into effect in Kuwait. The law repealed previous anti-narcotics legislation and expanded the circumstances in which drug-related offences would result in the imposition of the death penalty.[112] Under the new law, the death penalty is made the mandatory sentence for drug production and trafficking with aggravated circumstances, namely in the case of repeat offenders; for those selling drugs to a minor; using a minor or a person with a mental disability, or abusing a position of authority, to sell drugs; selling drugs in prisons, police stations, drug treatment or rehabilitation facilities, places of worship, educational institutions, or sports clubs; and for those establishing or managing a criminal organization for the purpose of committing offences under this law. It is also the mandatory punishment for forcing others to consume drugs, or administering them without knowledge, when it results in death; and for planting or hiding drugs on another person with the intent of accusing them of the offence, when it results in the execution of that person. The death penalty remains discretionary for those found guilty of producing, cultivating, possessing, purchasing, exchanging, or importing for the purpose of trafficking, or for selling and smuggling drugs.[113]

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[110] Haalvsh X post, "Implementation of the death sentence of at least one Baluchi child offender in Iranshahr prison", 2 October 2025, https://x.com/haalvsh/status/1973822359284162932?s=20

[111] The amendment was published in the official gazette on 17 February.

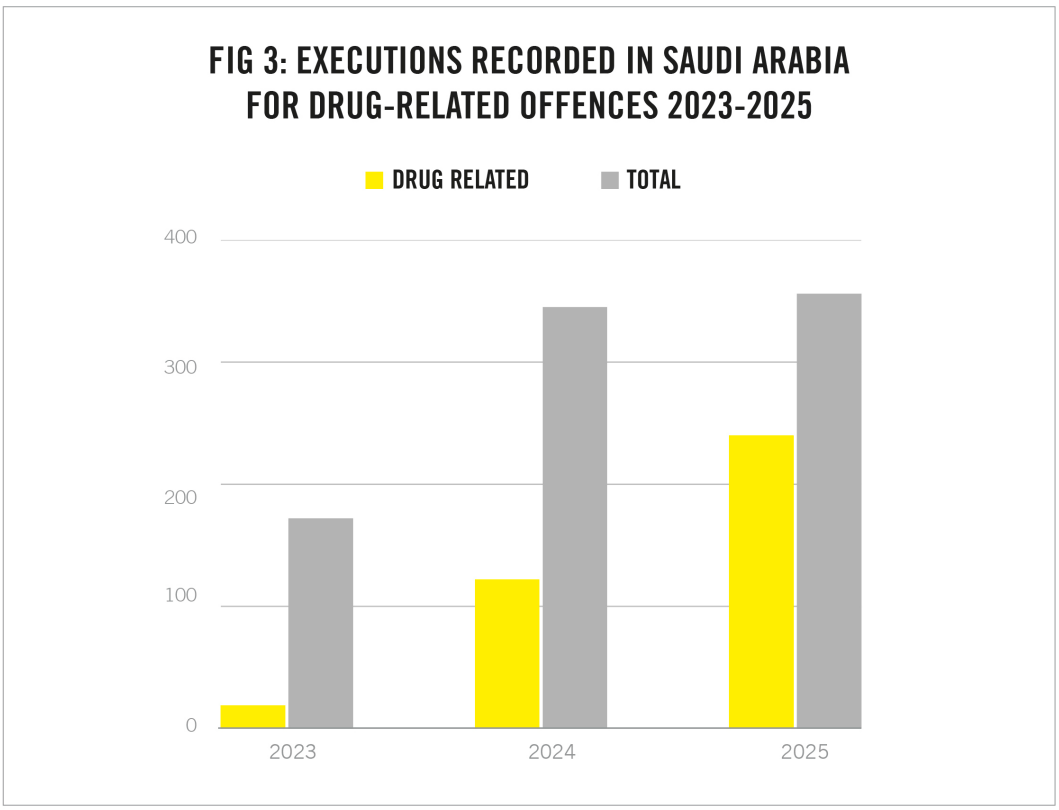
[112] Statement of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, upon the issuance of Decree-Law No. 159/2025 as reported in Kuwait Police, 30 November 2025, available in Arabic at https://www.moi.gov.kw/main/News/Index/112067

[113] Kuwait Police – General Department of Public Relation and Media Security, "Safeguarding Our Homeland–The National Campaign to Raise Awareness of the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Law", https://www.moi.gov.kw/main/content/docs/antidrug/en/narcotics-law.pdf; Eastlaws, "State of Kuwait -Decree Law NO. 159 I 2025 Published On 30-11–2025", https://www.eastlaws.com/legislation-full-text/en/kuwait/decree-law/30-11-2025/no-159?type=1&id=5064223

On 20 November, the Council of Ministers of **Lebanon** considered and supported draft law 160/2025 on the abolition of the death penalty. The bill was presented by seven members of Parliament and was pending before the National Assembly at the end of the year.[114]

No executions were confirmed in **Libya**, where at least 13 death sentences were imposed. Of these, nine were for murder, three for rape and murder, and one for drug trafficking.

The authorities of **Saudi Arabia** continued to pursue executions at an alarming rate, frequently with complete disregard for restrictions on the use of this punishment set out under international human rights law and standards and often in violation of the right to a fair trial. Executions announced by official sources reached the record-high figure of 356, driven by an alarming increase in the number of drug-related cases. The 240 executions recorded for drug-related offences represented 67% of the total, rising from 122 in 2024 (35%) and only two in 2023. A significant proportion of these executions involved foreign nationals (188, or 78% of all drug-related executions in 2025).



In June 2025 alone, Saudi Arabia executed 46 people, including 37 for drug-related offences – an average of more than one drug-related execution per day. Of these, 34 were foreign nationals from Egypt, Ethiopia, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria.[115] Among others, Egyptian fisherman Essam Ahmed was executed in December for drug-related offences.[116] Saudi authorities arrested him in December 2021 on a fishing boat between Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Essam Ahmed said he was coerced by a man wielding a gun to transport drugs. In November 2022, the Criminal Court in Tabuk sentenced him to death after a grossly unfair trial for non-violent, drug-related offences. He said he was tortured immediately after his arrest and "confessed" under torture to drug trafficking. He had no lawyer throughout his arrest and investigation.

[114] National Human Rights Commission of Lebanon, "Commission calls for the passage of a law abolishing the death penalty in the first legislative session of Parliament", 5 March 2026, https://nhrclb.org/en/archives/4495; Ministry of Justice of Lebanon, "Bill to abolish the death penalty", https://www.justice.gov.lb/index.php/page-details/9/1 ; the bill is also available at https://nhrclb.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/160-68e7861070f43427971397.pdf

[115] Amnesty International, "Saudi Arabia: New report denounces alarming escalation in executions including of foreign nationals convicted of drug-related offences", 7 July 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/saudi-arabia-escalation-executions-foreign-nationals-drug-related-offences/

[116] Amnesty International, "Saudi Arabia: Further Information: Essam Ahmed Executed After Grossly Unfair Trial" (MDE 23/0585/2025), 22 December 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/0585/2025/en/

Most executions in Saudi Arabia did not meet the threshold of the "most serious crimes" under international human rights law and standards, interpreted as intentional killing. In addition to drug-related offences, other executions for crimes that did not meet this threshold included armed robbery (2); armed robbery combined with a drug-related offence (1); kidnapping, forgery and sorcery (2); kidnapping and rape (1); kidnapping and sexual harassment (1); aiding murder (2), and rape (1).

Broadly defined terrorism-related offences related to 45 executions, in many cases impacting those belonging to the country's Shia minority who supported "anti-government" protests between 2011 and 2013.

Fifty-eight people, including two women, were executed for murder and three men for armed robbery and murder. Individuals who were below 18 years of age at the time of the alleged crime continued to face executions, including for crimes related to their participation in anti-government protests and following grossly unfair trials that primarily relied on torture-tainted "confessions".[117] On 21 August 2025, Saudi authorities executed Jalal Labbad, born on 3 April 1995, after he was arrested in connection with his participation in protests in 2011 and 2012 against the treatment of Saudi Arabia's Shia minority in Al-Qatif, as well as his attendance at funerals of individuals killed by security forces. On 1 August 2022, the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) convicted and sentenced him to death for alleged offences committed when he was 16 and 17 years old.[118]

On 20 October 2025, Saudi authorities executed Abdullah al-Derazi for crimes allegedly committed when he was under 18 years of age. Abdullah al-Derazi was sentenced to death on 20 February 2018 after a grossly unfair trial that relied on a torture-tainted "confession". The Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) convicted Abdullah al-Derazi of "terrorism"-related charges following his participation in "riots in al-Qatif [in the Shia majority Eastern Province], and chanting slogans against the state and causing chaos" and "attacking security officials with Molotov cocktails". Abdullah al-Derazi was 17 at the time of the alleged crime.[119]

On 1 October, Saber Ben Chouchane was convicted and sentenced to death in **Tunisia** for attempting to overthrow the state, insulting the president and spreading false information online under Article 72 of the Penal Code and Decree-Law 54. The charges stemmed from his Facebook posts which included criticism of the president and calls for a public protest.[120] Following a public international outcry, the President of Tunisia, Kais Saied, pardoned him only a few days after the conviction.[121] Four other death sentences were recorded for murder, two for terrorism-related offences and 11 for terrorism-related offences that resulted in death.

Three Indian nationals, including one woman, were executed in the **UAE**. All were convicted of murder in separate cases.

The yearly total of executions recorded in **Yemen** (51) continued to steadily increase compared to 2024 (at least 38) and 2023 (at least 15). All known executions in 2025 were carried out by the internationally recognized government and involved Yemeni nationals. The executions were carried out following mandatory death sentences for murder (49) and for rape of a minor and murder (2).

The number of recorded death sentences (94) decreased from an exceptionally high figure in 2024 (at least 152). The Huthi de facto authorities imposed most of these death sentences (87), including 62 for espionage, "collaborating with the enemy" and security offences; four for drug-related offences, two for murder and one for joining an armed group affiliated with Al-Qaeda and participating in incidents involving the killing of security personnel. Eighteen individuals were convicted and sentenced to death in the same case for sexual acts that do not constitute internationally recognized offences – including sexual relations among consenting adults of the same-sex, and drug-related offences. Courts under the control of the international recognized government imposed at least seven new death sentences, including six for drug-related offences and one for robbery and looting against the army.

[117] Amnesty International, "Saudi Arabia: Two young men at imminent risk of execution: Abdullah al-Derazi, Jalal Labbad", (MDE 23/7363/2023), 17 January 2024, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/7363/2023/en/
[118] Amnesty International, "Saudi Arabia: Further Information: Jalal Labbad Executed for Alleged Crimes as a Child" (MDE 23/0239/2025), 29 August 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/0239/2025/en/
[119] Amnesty International, "Saudi Arabia: Further Information: Abdullah al-Derazi Executed for Alleged Crimes as a Child" (MDE 23/0412/2025), 21 October 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde23/0412/2025/en/
[120] Amnesty International, "Tunisia: Authorities must immediately overturn death sentence for peaceful dissent", 7 October 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/10/tunisia-authorities-must-immediately-overturn-death-sentence-for-peaceful-dissent/
[121] Al Jazeera, "Tunisia pardons man sentenced to death over Facebook posts", 7 October 2025, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/10/7/tunisia-pardons-man-sentenced-to-death-over-facebook-posts

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

REGIONAL TRENDS

- Executions were recorded in Somalia and South Sudan, two of the five countries in the region known to have implemented death sentences in the last decade.
- Recorded death sentences rose sharply, driven by increases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and Sudan.
- Legislative initiatives to abolish the death penalty were registered in Gambia and Liberia, while efforts to reintroduce or expand the death penalty's scope were registered in Burkina Faso and Chad.
- Nigeria's House of Representatives introduced a bill to abolish the death penalty, while the Senate introduced a different bill to expand its scope of application.

COUNTRY	2025 RECORDED EXECUTIONS	2025 RECORDED DEATH SENTENCES	PEOPLE KNOWN TO BE UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH AT THE END OF 2025
Botswana	0	0	14+
Burkina Faso (Abolitionist for ordinary crimes only)	0	0	0
Cameroon	0	0	+
Comoros	0	2+	14[122]
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0	359+	+
Equatorial Guinea (Abolitionist for ordinary crimes only)	0	0	0
Eritrea	0	0	0
Eswatini	0	0	1
Ethiopia	0	5+	+
Gambia	0	3	18+
Ghana	0	0	91+
Kenya	0	2	119
Lesotho	0	0	0
Liberia	0	0	11
Malawi	0	0	+
Mali	0	10	+

[122] On 29 July 2025, Soilihi Ali Said, Director General of Prison Administration, confirmed to media there were 14 individuals under the sentence of death in the Comoros. Le Journal de Mayotte, "Comores : quatorze personnes dans le couloir de la mort" (Comoros: fourteen individuals on death row), 29 July 2025, https://lejournaldemayotte.yt/2025/07/29/comores-quatorze-personnes-dans-le-couloir-de-la-mort/

COUNTRY	2025 RECORDED EXECUTIONS	2025 RECORDED DEATH SENTENCES	PEOPLE KNOWN TO BE UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH AT THE END OF 2025
Mauritania	0	31+	181+
Niger	0	6+	30+
Nigeria	0	243+	3,833+
Somalia	17+	13+	+
South Sudan	1	+	220+
Sudan	0	87+	117+
Tanzania	0	8+	711+
Uganda	0	0	104+
Zimbabwe (Abolitionist for ordinary crimes only)	0	0	0[123]

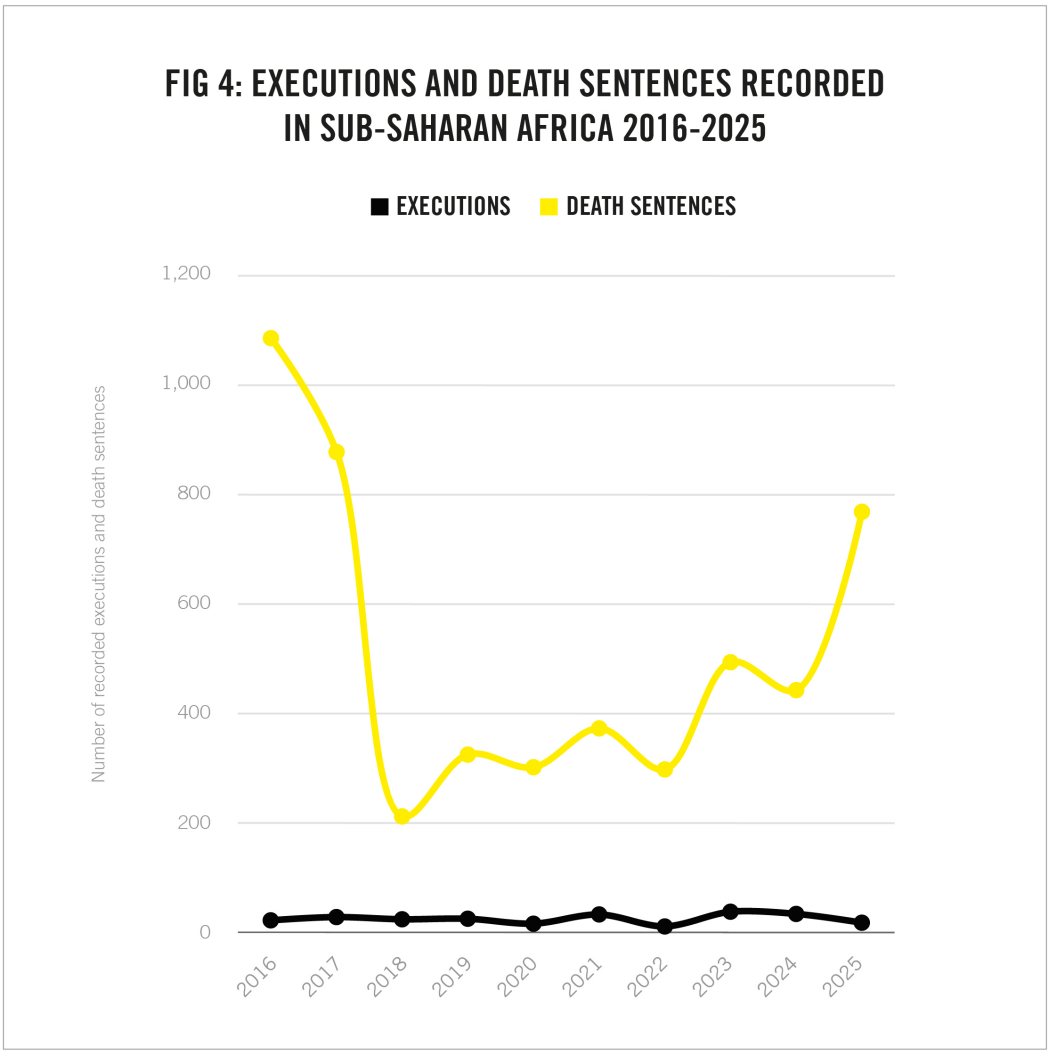
Executions in sub-Saharan Africa remain concentrated in a handful of countries. In 2025, executions were recorded in Somalia and South Sudan, two of the five countries known to have implemented death sentences in the last decade. However, recorded death sentences rose by almost three quarters compared to 2024, even though the number of countries imposing death sentences decreased by one compared to the same period. During the year under review, legislative processes towards the abolition of the death penalty were advanced in Gambia, Liberia and Nigeria, while initiatives towards reinstating or expanding the scope of application of the death penalty were initiated in Burkina Faso, Chad and Nigeria.

Recorded executions in the region fell by 47%, from 34 in 2024 to 18 in 2025, making 2025 the year with the third lowest recorded total executions in the region since 2016 (Figure 4). Somalia alone accounted for 94% of all known executions in 2025.

Death sentences recorded by Amnesty International in the region increased by 74%, from 443 in 2024 to 771 in 2025, making the 2025 known total the third highest in the region since 2016 (Figure 4). The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) alone accounted for nearly half of all known death sentences, as military courts continued to convict a large number of military personnel and sentence them to death in the context of the armed conflict in the eastern DRC.[124]

However, the number of countries that issued death sentences decreased from 14 in 2024 to 13 in 2025, while increases in the number of death sentences issued were registered in six countries compared to eight in 2024: Democratic Republic of the Congo (from at least 125 to at least 359); Ethiopia (from at least 3 to at least 5); Gambia (from 0 to 3); Mauritania (from at least 23 to at least 31); Nigeria (from at least 186 to at least 243); and Sudan (from at least 30 to at least 87).

[123] At the end of 2024, Amnesty International received official information indicating that 48 individuals remained on death row in Zimbabwe. In a letter dated 7 April 2026, the authorities confirmed that there were no individuals on death row at the end of 2025.
[124] ACTUALITE. CD, "Meurtres, pillages, fuite devant les rebelles du M23 au Sud-Kivu: 212 militaires condamnés à mort, 72 autres acquittés", 14 February 2025, https://actualite.cd/2025/02/14/meurtres-pillages-fuite-devant-les-rebelles-du-m23-au-sud-kivu-212-militaires-condamnes; ACTUALITE. CD, "DRC-M23: behind the front line of Lubero, 55 soldiers sentenced to death for fleeing from the enemy", 28 February 2025, https://actualite.cd/2025/02/28/rdc-m23-derriere-la-ligne-de-front-de-lubero-55-militaires-condamnes-mort-pour-fuite



During the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN Human Rights Council in January, the **Gambia** supported several recommendations calling for the abolition of the death penalty and confirmed its ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.[125] In March, the Gambia passed the Criminal Offences Act, 2025, and the Criminal Procedure Act, 2025, removing the death penalty for murder, treason and other offences against the state, which are now punishable by terms of imprisonment.[126] However, in July, the National Assembly rejected at its second reading the Constitution (Promulgation) Bill, 2024, which would have replaced the 1997 Constitution with a new text that did not contain any provision authorizing the death penalty.[127] The failure to adopt the proposed new constitution stalled progress towards full abolition of the death penalty, which is still provided for in a number of laws such as the Armed Forces Act and the Anti-Terrorism Act.

The government of **Liberia** took steps to revise the legal framework relating to the death penalty. During the UPR held in November, the government pointed to a draft bill that would abolish the death penalty by amending various chapters in Title 26 of the Liberian Code of Laws Revised relating to sentencing and

[125] Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Gambia, 4th Cycle - 48th Session, UN Doc. A/HRC/59/6, 21 January 2025.
[126] Gambian Ministry of Justice, Criminal Offences Act, 2025, 28 March 2025, https://moj.gov.gm/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Assent-Copy-Criminal-Offences-Act-2025-Passed-28th-March-2025.pdf; Criminal Procedure Act, 2025, 28 March 2025, https://moj.gov.gm/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Assent-Copy-Criminal-Procedure-Act-2025-Passed-28th-March-2025.pdf
[127] Constitution Net, "Constitution Bill Rejected at Second Reading: Halting the Reform Process in The Gambia?", 8 July 2025, https://constitutionnet.org/news/voices/constitution-bill-rejected-second-reading-halting-reform-process-gambia

penalties, which was pending cabinet review and approval.[128] The Liberian government reaffirmed their policy of not supporting the enforcement of the death penalty and further reiterated the country's commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty and other human rights commitments.[129]

A landmark bill to abolish the death penalty in **Nigeria** passed a second reading in the House of Representatives in March 2025. The bill sought to remove the death penalty under Section 33(1) of the 1999 Constitution and, thereby, effectively abolish the death penalty in the country. However, on 27 March, the House rescinded its earlier approval of the bill to allow for further debate and consideration.[130] The House later considered a more limited reform involving a constitutional amendment bill to replace the death penalty with life imprisonment for specific groups, such as pregnant women.[131] By the end of 2025, the bill was pending adoption by the National Assembly.[132] Notwithstanding these positive initiatives, a bill was introduced to the Senate seeking to amend the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2013, to designate kidnapping, hostage-taking and other related offences as acts of terrorism that would carry the mandatory death penalty.[133] By the end of the year, the bill remained at the Senate Joint Committees on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters; National Security and Intelligence; and Interior.[134]

A few other countries in the region also embarked on worrying initiatives that could reintroduce the death penalty or expand its scope of application. As part of flawed security, narratives intended to project an image of strong government, some governments have supported the death penalty as an effective and necessary tool to protect public safety. In **Burkina Faso**, following the announcement by the military authorities in November 2024 that it was considering reinstating the death penalty,[135] the Council of Ministers adopted on 4 December a draft bill to reform the Penal Code reinstating the death penalty for offences such as "high treason", "terrorism", and "acts of espionage".[136] By the end of 2025, the draft bill was believed to be pending approval of the Transitional Legislative Assembly.

In June, the authorities in **Chad** established a commission to review matters related to the death penalty.[137] The commission is mandated to conduct a comprehensive examination of the death penalty, assess the domestic legal framework in light of Chad's international obligations, consider the possibility of reinstating the death penalty, and make recommendations to the authorities. The commission was established amidst an expansion of authoritarian practices, including efforts to limit and suppress protests on the grounds of preserving public order.[138] Against this backdrop, civil society organizations expressed concern that the death penalty could be used to retaliate against dissenting views.[139]

In **Zimbabwe**, the resentencing process in 2025 following the abolition of the death penalty for ordinary crimes in 2024 led to the commutation of all existing death sentences to a range of alternative penalties. Amnesty International also recorded pardons and commutations in Botswana, Gambia, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana and Nigeria.

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[128] Human Rights Council, "National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21: Liberia", UN Doc. A/HRC/WG.6/50/LBR/1, 21 August 2025, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4088160/files/A_HRC_WG.6_50_LBR_1-EN.pdf
[129] Letter from the Director of the Human Rights Protection Division at the Ministry of Justice in response to Amnesty International, 23 January 2026. On file with Amnesty International.
[130] The Nigerian Lawyer, "House of Reps Reverses Approval of Bills on Death Penalty, Immunity Removal", 27 March 2025, https://thenigerialawyer.com/house-of-reps-reverses-approval-of-bills-on-death-penalty-immunity-removal/
[131] Punch Nigeria, "Reps propose life jail for condemned pregnant women", 31 December 2025, https://punchng.com/reps-propose-life-jail-for-condemned-pregnant-women/
[132] Nigeria Democratic Report, "Lawmakers Propose Life Sentences Instead of Capital Punishment for Pregnant Women", 31 December 2025, https://www.ndr.org.ng/lawmakers-propose-life-sentences-instead-of-capital-punishment-for-pregnant-women/
[133] All Africa, "Nigeria: As Senate Holds Public Hearing on Death Penalty for Kidnappers...", 30 December 2025, https://allafrica.com/stories/202512300129.html; Federal Republic of Nigeria official Gazette, 22 April 2013, https://placng.org/lawsofnigeria/laws/terrorism_bill.pdf
[134] All Africa, "Nigeria: As Senate Holds Public Hearing on Death Penalty for Kidnappers..." (previously cited).
[135] Voice of America News, "Burkina wants to reinstate death penalty, government source says", 9 November 2024, https://www.voanews.com/a/7858302.html
[136] Amnesty International, "Burkina Faso: Plans to reinstate death penalty must be stopped", 5 December 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/12/burkina-faso-death-penalty/
[137] Decree No. 82/PR/PM/MJDH/SE/SG/DGA/DLSA/2025, 23 July 2025, on file with Amnesty International.
[138] Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights: Chad, 28 April 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/8515/2025/en/
[139] The World Organisation Against Torture and the Chadian League for Human Rights, "Chad: Concerns over the creation of a commission to reinstate the death penalty", 18 August 2025, https://www.omct.org/en/resources/statements/chad-concerns-over-the-creation-of-a-commission-to-reinstate-the-death-penalty

ANNEX I: RECORDED EXECUTIONS AND DEATH SENTENCES IN 2025

This report only covers the judicial use of the death penalty and does not include figures for extrajudicial executions. Amnesty International only reports figures for which it can find reasonable confirmation, although the true figures for some countries are significantly higher. Some states intentionally conceal death penalty proceedings; others do not keep or make available data on the numbers of death sentences and executions.

Where "+" appears after a figure next to the name of a country – for example, Tunisia (18+) – it means that Amnesty International confirmed 18 executions or death sentences in Tunisia but believes there were more than 18. Where "+" appears after a country name without a figure – for instance, Viet Nam (+) – it means that Amnesty International has corroborated executions or death sentences (more than one) in that country but had insufficient information to provide a credible minimum figure. When calculating global and regional totals, "+" has been counted as two including for China.

RECORDED EXECUTIONS IN 2025

China 1,000s

Iran 2,159+

Saudi Arabia 356+

Yemen 51+

USA 47

Egypt 23

Somalia 17+

Kuwait 17

Singapore 17

Afghanistan 6

United Arab Emirates 3

Japan 1

South Sudan 1

Taiwan 1

Iraq +

North Korea +

Viet Nam +

RECORDED DEATH SENTENCES IN 2025

China 1,000s

Egypt 492

Democratic Republic of the Congo 359+

Nigeria 243+

Bangladesh 185+

Viet Nam 138+

India 128

Thailand 119

Yemen 94+

Sudan 87+

Iraq 79+

Indonesia 68+

Pakistan 68+

Sri Lanka 49+

Mauritania 31+

USA 23

Tunisia 18+

Kuwait 15

Malaysia 15

Libya 13+

Somalia 13+

Algeria 11

Mali 10

Tanzania 8+

Jordan 6+

Laos 6+

Myanmar 6+

Niger 6+

Ethiopia 5+

Qatar 4+

Gambia 3

Maldives 3

United Arab Emirates 3

Comoros 2+

Kenya 2

Singapore 2

Taiwan 2

Syria 1+

Bahrain 1

Japan 1

Lebanon 1

Morocco/Western Sahara 1

Trinidad and Tobago 1

Afghanistan +

Iran +

North Korea +

Saudi Arabia +

South Sudan

ANNEX II: ABOLITIONIST AND RETENTIONIST COUNTRIES

AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2025

Close to three quarters of the countries in the world have now abolished the death penalty in law or practice. As of 31 December 2025, the numbers were as follows:

Abolitionist for all crimes: 113

Abolitionist for ordinary crimes only: 9

Abolitionist in practice: 23

Total abolitionist in law or practice: 145

Retentionist: 54

The following are lists of countries in the four categories: abolitionist for all crimes, abolitionist for ordinary crimes only, abolitionist in practice and retentionist.

1. ABOLITIONIST FOR ALL CRIMES

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

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Central African Republic, Colombia, Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niue, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Togo, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Vatican City, Venezuela, Zambia.

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:[140]

Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Israel, Peru, Zimbabwe.

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 last 10 years or more and are believed to have a policy or established practice of not carrying out executions:

[140] No executions were recorded in these countries in more than 10 years.

Algeria, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ghana, Grenada, Kenya, Laos, Liberia, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco/Western Sahara, Niger, Russia,[141] South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tonga, Tunisia.

4. RETENTIONIST

Countries that retain the death penalty for ordinary crimes:

Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Botswana, China, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nigeria, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine (State of), Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Viet Nam, Yemen.

[141] Russia introduced a moratorium on executions in August 1996. However, executions were carried out between 1996 and 1999 in the Chechen Republic.

ANNEX III: RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL TREATIES
AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2025

The community of nations has adopted four international treaties providing for the abolition of the death penalty. One is of worldwide scope; three are regional.

Below are short descriptions of the four treaties, a list of states parties to the treaties and lists of countries which have signed but not ratified the treaties, as of 31 December 2025. States may become a party to international treaties either by acceding to them or by ratifying them. Signature indicates an intention to become a party at a later date through ratification. States are bound under international law to respect the provisions of treaties to which they are a party, and to do nothing to defeat the object and purpose of treaties which they have signed.

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 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, is of worldwide scope. It provides for the total abolition of the death penalty but allows states parties to retain the death penalty in time of war if they make a reservation to that effect at the time of ratifying or acceding to the Protocol. Any state which is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights can become a party to the Protocol.

States parties: Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Norway, Palestine (State of), Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Togo, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Zambia (total: 92).

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

The Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty, adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States in 1990, provides for the total abolition of the death penalty but allows states parties to retain the death penalty in wartime if they make a reservation to that effect at the time of ratifying or acceding to the Protocol. Any state party to the American Convention on Human Rights can become a party to the Protocol.

States parties: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela (total: 13).

PROTOCOL NO. 6 TO THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, CONCERNING THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY[142]

Protocol No. 6 to the (European) Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights), concerning the abolition of the death penalty, adopted by the Council of Europe in 1983, provides for the abolition of the death penalty in peacetime; states parties may retain the death penalty for crimes "in time of war or of imminent threat of war". Any state party to the European Convention on Human Rights can become a party to the Protocol.

States parties: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom (total: 46).

PROTOCOL NO. 13 TO THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, CONCERNING THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Protocol No. 13 to the (European) Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights), concerning the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances, adopted by the Council of Europe in 2002, provides for the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances, including in time of war or of imminent threat of war. Any state party to the European Convention on Human Rights can become a party to the Protocol.

States parties: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye Ukraine, United Kingdom (total: 45).

Signed but not ratified: Azerbaijan (total: 1).

[142] Russia ceased to be a signatory to the treaty on 16 September 2022.

ANNEX IV: VOTING RESULTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION 60/17

ADOPTED ON 7 OCTOBER 2025

On 7 October 2025, the Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted resolution 60/17 during its 60th session. The resolution was adopted by a recorded vote during its 43rd meeting as follows:[143]

Votes in favour – Albania, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Iceland, Kyrgyzstan, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, and Switzerland (total: 31).

Votes against – China, Ethiopia, Japan, Kuwait, Maldives, Qatar and Sudan (total: 7).

Abstentions – Algeria, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Thailand and Viet Nam (total: 8).

[143] Human Rights Council, Resolution 60/17 on the Question of the death penalty, adopted on 7 October 2025, UN Doc. A/HRC/60/17, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/RES/60/17

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IS A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. WHEN INJUSTICE HAPPENS TO ONE PERSON, IT MATTERS TO US ALL.

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DEATH SENTENCES AND EXECUTIONS 2025

Amnesty International's monitoring of the global use of the death penalty recorded 2,707 executions in 2025, an increase by 78% from 1,518 in 2024. This figure does not include the thousands of executions that Amnesty International believes continued to be carried out in China. The total number of executing countries was 17, which is in line with historical low trends recorded since 2018.

The rise in recorded executions was primarily linked to a spike in executions in Iran, where the total reached 2,159, more than doubling the 2024 figure of at least 972. This was the highest number recorded for Iran since 1981. The authorities of Saudi Arabia topped the country's record-high figure of 2024, carrying out at least 356 executions among a sustained use of the death penalty for drug-related offences.

Compared to 2024, significant increases in executions were also recorded in Egypt, Kuwait, Singapore and USA, while a substantial decrease was recorded in Iraq and Somalia. The use of state secrecy and other restrictive practices in China, North Korea and Viet Nam, among other states, continued to impair accurate assessments of the use of the death penalty.

Amnesty International recorded that close to half of all known executions (1,257) were for drug-related offences, which do not meet the threshold of "most serious crimes" to which the death penalty must be restricted under international law and standards. Five countries – China, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Singapore – were known to have carried out executions for drug-related offences in 2025. Amnesty International could not independently confirm a total figure for China or whether such executions took place in Viet Nam.

However, some notable developments were documented. Gambia abolished the death penalty for murder and other offences, while Viet Nam abolished it for drug transportation and seven other crimes. Governor Kay Ivey of Alabama, USA, granted the first clemency to a Black person on death row – and only the second clemency in the state - since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. The authorities of Lebanon and Nigeria introduced bills to abolish the death penalty, while the Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan declared attempts to reintroduce the death penalty in the country to be unconstitutional.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception.

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