Tajikistan
Joint Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review:
The Death Penalty

Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1996
Capital Punishment Justice Project
and
The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty

for the 53rd Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
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The Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based nongovernmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. Established in 1983, The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publications. In 1991, The Advocates adopted a formal commitment to oppose the death penalty worldwide and organized a death penalty project to provide pro bono assistance on post-conviction appeals, as well as education and advocacy to end capital punishment. The Advocates currently holds a seat on the Steering Committee of the World Coalition against the Death Penalty.

Capital Punishment Justice Project (CPJP) is an Australian-based NGO that stands for a world without the death penalty or other forms of state-sanctioned killing. CPJP works closely with partners in Asia to support the defence of people facing the death penalty, assist local anti-death penalty civil society organisations, and campaign to convince governments to abolish the death penalty. Ending the death penalty is one of the Australian Government's human rights priorities and CPJP's work is imperative to ensuring that Australia is a leading voice on abolition.

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP), an alliance of more than 150 NGOs, bar associations, local authorities, and unions, was created in Rome on 13 May 2002. The aim of the World Coalition is to strengthen the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Its ultimate objective is to obtain the universal abolition of the death penalty. To achieve its goal, the World Coalition advocates for a definitive end to death sentences and executions in those countries where the death penalty is in force. In some countries, it is seeking to obtain a reduction in the use of capital punishment as a first step towards abolition.

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1. In 2004, the President of Tajikistan announced the introduction of a moratorium on the application of the death penalty,[1] and in 2005 he signed a moratorium bill into law.[2] Since that time courts have not sentenced people to death.[3]

2. Despite supporting UPR recommendations in 2021 to finalize the abolition of the death penalty and to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Tajikistan has taken no steps toward doing so.

Scope of international obligations; Acceptance of international norms; Death penalty

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not implemented

3. In its third-cycle Universal Periodic Review in 2021, Tajikistan accepted 16 recommendations to ratify or accede to OP2, including Iceland's recommendation to "[c]reate a timeline with concrete steps to abolish the death penalty by 2026 and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."[4] Tajikistan also accepted five additional recommendations to abolish the death penalty that did not specifically mention OP2.[5] During the review, the delegation from Tajikistan stated that "[t]he legal abolition of the death penalty was under consideration."[6]

4. Despite these commitments, Tajikistan has taken no steps since 2021 toward finalizing the process of abolition of the death penalty or ratification of the Second Optional Protocol.

5. Plans have been in the works for more than 15 years. In its 2019 constructive dialogue with the Human Rights Committee, the delegation from Tajikistan explained that authorities had established "[a] multi-stakeholder working group . . . in 2010 to study the social and legal aspects of abolishing the death penalty."[7] The Committee recommended that Tajikistan "maintain and ensure compliance with the moratorium on executions and take concrete steps, within a clear time frame, towards the abolition of the death penalty and the accession to, or ratification of, the second Optional Protocol" to the ICCPR.[8]

6. Since Tajikistan established a moratorium on the application of the death penalty, some political leaders have called for the moratorium to be lifted, including the Prosecutor General as recently as August 2023.[9] Parliament, however, has never discussed lifting the moratorium.[10]

7. In 2022, Tajikistan sent a high-level delegation to the 8th World Congress Against the Death Penalty, headed by Justice Minister Muzaffar Ashuriyon and Assistant to the President for Legal Affairs Zarif Alizoda.[11] The Justice Minister spoke during the opening ceremony, highlighting Tajikistan's achievements in implementing a moratorium on the death penalty and introducing mechanisms for the abolition of the death penalty.[12] In February 2023, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Muzaffar Huseinzoda met with the Vice President of the International Commission Against the Death Penalty on the margins of the high-level segments of the Human Rights Council session.[13]

8. On 17 December 2024, Tajikistan again voted in favor of the UN General Assembly resolution calling for a global moratorium on the death penalty.[14] Tajikistan has supported the resolution in every vote since 2007.[15]

9. **Suggested recommendations**:

    - **Publicize a timeline for abolishing the death penalty and ratifying the Second Optional Protocol, with a view to completion no later than 2027.**

- **Request technical assistance from the Friends of the Second Optional Protocol to finalize the ratification process.**
- **Act swiftly to implement the Human Rights Committee's 2019 recommendations concerning the death penalty**.
- **Take all necessary steps to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, without reservations**.

[1] Human Rights Committee, *Communications Nos. 1263/2004 and 1264/2004* (30 Oct. 2008), UN Doc. CCPR/C/94/D/1264-1264/2004, ¶ 1.2

[2] Hands Off Cain, *Tajikistan*, https://www.handsoffcain.info/bancadati/asia-middle-east-australia-and-oceania/tajikistan-50000268 (last visited 30 Mar. 2026).

[3] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Tajikistan* (6 Jan. 2022), UN Doc. A/HRC/49/12, ¶ 118.

[4] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Tajikistan* (6 Jan. 2022), UN Doc. A/HRC/49/12, ¶ 123.18 (Lithuania), .23 (Portugal), .25 (Slovenia), .32 (Nepal, Latvia), .33 (Paraguay), .34 (Austria, Estonia, Australia), .35 (Italy), .36 (Belgium), .37 (Cyprus), .38 (France), .39 (Iceland), .127 (Mexico), .131 (Uruguay); Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Tajikistan - Addendum*, (22 Feb. 2022), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/49/12/Add.1, at 2-3, 6.

[5] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Tajikistan* (6 Jan. 2022), UN Doc. A/HRC/49/12, ¶ 123.128 (Latvia), .129 (Moldova), .130 (Slovakia), .132 (Costa Rica), .133 (Germany); Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Tajikistan - Addendum*, (22 Feb. 2022), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/49/12/Add.1, at 6.

[6] Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Tajikistan* (6 Jan. 2022), UN Doc. A/HRC/49/12, ¶ 118.

[7] Human Rights Committee, *Summary record of the 3611th meeting, 2 July 2019*, UN Doc. CCPR/C/SR.3611 (8 July 2019), ¶ 30.

[8] Human Rights Committee, *Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Tajikistan*, UN Doc. CCPR/C/TJK/CO/3* (22 Aug. 2019), ¶ 28.

[9] Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting*, Tajik experts oppose the abolition of the moratorium on the death penalty*, 11 Dec. 2023, https://cabar.asia/en/tajik-experts-oppose-the-abolition-of-the-moratorium-on-the-death-penalty.

[10] Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting*, Tajik experts oppose the abolition of the moratorium on the death penalty*, 11 Dec. 2023, https://cabar.asia/en/tajik-experts-oppose-the-abolition-of-the-moratorium-on-the-death-penalty.

[11] Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Federal Republic of Germany, *Participation of the Tajik delegation in the 8th World Congress against the Death Penalty*, 17 Nov. 2022, https://mfa.tj/en/berlin/view/11552/participation-of-the-tajik-delegation-in-the-8th-world-congress-against-the-death-penalty.

[12] Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Federal Republic of Germany, *Participation of the Tajik delegation in the 8th World Congress against the Death Penalty*, 17 Nov. 2022, https://mfa.tj/en/berlin/view/11552/participation-of-the-tajik-delegation-in-the-8th-world-congress-against-the-death-penalty.

[13] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, *Meeting with the Vice-President of the International Commission Against the Death Penalty*, 28 Feb. 2023, https://mfa.tj/en/main/view/12149/meeting-with-the-vice-president-of-the-international-commission-against-the-death-penalty.

[14] World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, *Two thirds of the United Nations General Assembly vote in favor of the 10th resolution for a moratorium on the death penalty*, Dec. 20, 2024, https://worldcoalition.org/2024/12/20/two-thirds-of-the-united-nations-general-assembly-vote-in-favor-of-the-10th-resolution-for-a-moratorium-on-the-death-penalty/.

[15] International Commission Against the Death Penalty, Voting Records, https://icomdp.org/unga/ (last visited Mar. 30, 2025).