6 Executed as Jordan Resumes Death Penalty

Renew Moratorium; End Military Court Trials of Civilians



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Security members stand guard outside the State Security Court in Amman, Jordan, July 12, 2021. © 2021 Mohammad Abu Ghosh/Xinhua via Getty Images

(Amman) – Jordanian authorities executed six men by hanging on June 21, 2026, its first mass execution since 2017, Human Rights Watch said today. All six cases, two involving terrorism-related charges and three involving drug trafficking, included acts of violence in which members of the police or security forces were killed.

All six men were convicted following trials in Jordan's State Security Court, a military institution that includes military and civilian judges. Mohammad al-Momani, Jordan's communications minister, said the executions were carried out after the sentences received final judicial confirmation through the Court of Cassation, Cabinet endorsement, and royal decree.

"Carrying out six executions in a single morning marks a sharp return to a practice Jordan has used only sporadically since reinstating capital punishment 12 years ago," said Adam Coogle, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "Jordan should lead the

region by example on rights and protection and renew its moratorium on the death penalty."

Two of those executed, identified by authorities as Mahmoud Nayef Musa and Anwar Adel Saleh, were convicted in connection with the so-called "Salt Cell" case. The government said that they were members of a cell that detonated a bomb near a joint security patrol close to an annual festival in the town of Fuheis, west of Amman, on August 10, 2018, killing two members of the gendarmerie forces and wounding six others. The next day, during follow-up operations to detain the bombing suspects in the nearby town of al-Salt, four additional security personnel were killed.

A third man, Ibrahim Mansour, was executed for his role in a December 2022 ambush on a police patrol in the southern town of Maan that killed Colonel Abdulrazzaq al-Dalabeeh, then-deputy director of the Maan Police Directorate.

The remaining three men executed were also tried before the State Security Court, in cases that al-Momani said involved the killing of law enforcement officers during anti-narcotics operations.

The State Security Court's jurisdiction includes drug offenses alongside terrorism, treason, and espionage cases.

Jordan reinstated the death penalty in December 2014 after an eight-year unofficial moratorium, hanging 11 people convicted of murder. In March 2017, it executed 15 men, 10 of whom had been convicted by the State Security Court on terrorism-related charges.

Jordan's National Center for Human Rights (NCHR), the country's official human rights institution, said in its 2025 annual report that 284 people (264 men and 20 women) were under death sentences in 2023, and 276 (254 men and 22 women) in 2024. The center said in its report that new death sentences issued by the Grand Criminal Court fell from 25 in 2023 to 13 in 2024, and that the State Security Court issued no new death sentences from 2022 through 2024.

However, a 2023 Jordan Times report said that the State Security Court had sentenced three Salt Cell members to death on February 22, 2023.

Human Rights Watch opposes the creation and use of special courts to try national security crimes, because such courts are frequently authorized by law to conduct trials in a manner that restricts the rights of defendants beyond what is permissible under international human rights law. In many countries, regular criminal courts have proven effective in prosecuting terrorism offenses in accordance with international due process standards. Jordan should restrict its security court's jurisdiction over civilians as a step toward abolishing the court, Human Rights Watch said.

Human Rights Watch opposes capital punishment in all countries and under all circumstances. Capital punishment is unique in its cruelty and finality and is inevitably and universally plagued with arbitrariness, prejudice, and error. Most countries in the world have abolished the practice. In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly called on countries to establish a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, progressively restrict the practice, and reduce the offenses for which it might be imposed, with the view toward its eventual abolition.

“No one disputes that the police and security forces killed in these attacks deserved justice and their families deserved accountability, but the death penalty is an inherently cruel and irreversible punishment,” Coogle said.

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