



# AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY FOR A UNIVERSAL MORATORIUM ON THE USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY

PLENARY VOTE IN THE 73RD SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY – 17 DECEMBER 2018

Since 2007, a resolution for a universal moratorium on the use of the death penalty has been put to the vote of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) every two years. The 2018 resolution introduced new elements to strengthen the text, recalling in particular the discriminatory and arbitrary nature of the death penalty, and encouraging the States concerned to abolish the mandatory death penalty, with a view to its definitive abolition.

ECPM  
69 rue Michelet  
93100 Montreuil  
France

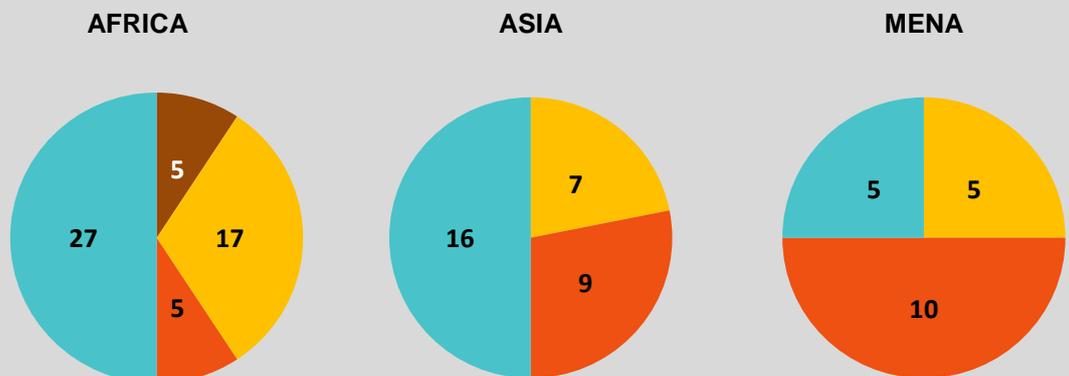
Tel : +33 1 57 63 03 57  
Fax : +33 1 80 87 70 46  
Email : [ecpm@ecpm.org](mailto:ecpm@ecpm.org)  
[www.ecpm.org](http://www.ecpm.org)

	2016	2018
<b>In favour</b> <i>New countries</i> : Dominica, Gambia, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Niger, Pakistan, Rwanda	<b>117</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Against</b> <i>New countries</i> : Bahrein, Nauru, Zimbabwe	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Abstention</b> <i>New countries</i> : Antigua and Barbuda, Congo, Guinea, Guyana, DRC, South Sudan	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Absent</b> <i>New countries</i> : Burundi, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Eswatini	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

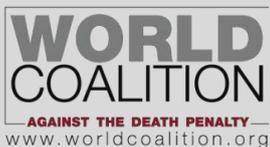
This year's resolution was presented in the plenary session of the UNGA on 17 December 2018; it was adopted by a large majority of states: **121** states voted in favour of the text, while **35** voted against it, **32** abstained and **5** did not take part in the vote. Those results mark a **very positive evolution**, compared to the General Assembly vote in 2016, since **9 new states supported the resolution**.

**ECPM welcomes this record number of states supporting the resolution**, thereby confirming the global tendency towards abolition of the death penalty.

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE 2018 VOTES



ECPM founding member /  
Steering committee



On the African continent, 4 **countries switched from an absence or an abstention to a positive vote** (the Gambia, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius and Rwanda). Only 5 African states voted against the text, while **27 supported it** and 17 abstained. The French-speaking Sub-Saharan Africa, in which a majority of states have a *de facto* moratorium on executions in place, voted overwhelmingly in favour of the resolution: no negative votes were recorded.

Other parts of the world saw some positive progress in the 2018 vote. **Antigua and Barbuda and Guyana** abstained, and **Dominica** supported the resolution, in a predominantly retentionist region. Similarly, **Malaysia voted in favour of the resolution for the first time, in a region where most states continue to carry out executions**. This positive development follows the announcement by the Malaysian government, in October 2018, of its will to abolish the death penalty in the country.

As in 2016, the **main opposition comes from the Middle-East and North Africa region**, in which 11 countries voted against the resolution, 5 abstained and only 4 supported it (including 3 in North Africa, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya).

Several setbacks have also been observed. **The Congo and Guinea**, though abolitionists, abstained in the vote; the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, which supported the text for the first time in November 2018 in the Third Committee vote, also abstained; the **Maldives**, after having announced their support of the text, finally voted against it. Finally, **of the 67 states having abstained or voted against the text, more than half (40) have not carried out any executions for at least 10 years**; they should therefore **have voted for a text consistent with their use of capital punishment**.

ECPM joins the international community in calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty and will continue, with its partners on the field, to fight for the universal abolition of capital punishment.