



WHY DOES THE DEATH PENALTY NOT PROTECT YOU?



Give a dog a bad name and hang him! The death penalty is not used to protect society from repeat offender monsters who rape children. Death row is mainly filled with people whose lives were worthless in the eyes of their judges because of their poverty, through discrimination or for political reasons. In reality, capital punishment is a tool of coercion used by people in power who mistrust those for whom they are responsible.

Opposing the death penalty means saying no to State murder, no to torture. It means retaining our humanity and our dignity in the face of barbarity! Finally, it means preserving the very foundation of our liberty and democracy: refusing to give States the right to kill those they should be looking after.

20,000 people were languishing on death row and more than **1,600** were executed in 2015*. These figures do not include death sentences in North Korea and China about which we do not have sufficient information. However, it is estimated that **5,000** people are executed every year in the People's Republic of China alone.

* According to figures from Amnesty International.



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STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF LOCAL ACTORS AND TAKING ACTION WITH THEM
ECPM fights against the isolation of activists wherever the death penalty remains by supporting the formation of national and regional coalitions against the death penalty (Morocco, Tunisia, Central Africa, Asia, etc.), as well as the creation of networks of abolitionist parliamentarians and lawyers. ECPM encourages efficiency among its local partners by organising training sessions and advocating at all political levels for their work to be supported.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS OF ABOLITION
ECPM works in schools to encourage young people to support the issue through drawing competitions, introductions to journalists and free class visits – with the participation of specialists, individuals previously sentenced to death or the families of prisoners sentenced to death. More than 10,000 middle and high school pupils have been involved since October 2009. ECPM raises awareness among the public of the situation of minorities and vulnerable groups by participating in Gay Pride, the Fête de la Humanité, Cities for Life, the World Day Against the Death Penalty, World Human Rights Day, etc.

UNITING ABOLITIONISTS FROM ACROSS THE WORLD
ECPM is the founder and organiser of the World Congresses Against the Death Penalty. These events bring together more than 1,300 people representing the world abolitionist movement. Ministers, parliamentarians, diplomats, activists, civil society organisations, researchers and journalists come together every three years to strengthen their ties and draw up strategies for the future.

ADVOCACY WITH THE HIGHEST AUTHORITIES
ECPM is the first NGO devoted to the struggle against the death penalty to have obtained ECOSOC status which guarantees it a presence and the possibility of advocating at the very heart of the UN system. ECPM initiated the creation of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty in 2002 which has more than 150 members – NGOs, bar associations, local bodies, unions – from across the world. Along with the World Coalition, ECPM leads advocacy and public mobilisation campaigns with political decision-makers (European Union, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, governments, etc.).

PROXIMITY TO PRISONERS SENTENCED TO DEATH
ECPM carries out and publishes judicial investigations into death row (in Morocco, Tunisia and the United States). Our publication "Investigation into Death Row in the DRC" received the French Republic's top Human Rights Prize.

ADVOCACY WITH THE HIGHEST AUTHORITIES
ECPM supports the victims of the death penalty, prisoners and their families such as Serge Atiaoui and Hank Skinner. ECPM supports correspondence with prisoners sentenced to death.

ECPM (Together Against the Death Penalty) is an organisation working for a particular cause: universal abolition of the death penalty under all circumstances.

right to life
cruelty
not a deterrent
innocent people
political repression
discriminatory
unfair
inefficient
new victims
vengeance

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THE DEATH PENALTY VIOLATES THE RIGHT TO LIFE

The death penalty violates the right to life, as set down in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Do we need to be reminded? Life is not something you earn.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

THE DEATH PENALTY IS NOT A DETERRENT AND IT DOES NOT MAKE SOCIETY SAFER (QUITE THE OPPOSITE).

When a State judges that life is not sacred, it spreads that idea among its inhabitants. Thus, violence leads to violence. In the end, countries which use the death penalty have higher crime rates than abolitionist countries.

Texas executes more people than any other American state and yet its crime rate has increased by 400% since it reintroduced the death penalty on 2 July 1976. According to the Global Peace Index*, only two retentionist countries, Japan (9th) and Singapore (20th), are among the 20 safest countries in the world. All the others have abolished the death penalty.

*<http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/indexes/global-peace-index>

THE DEATH PENALTY IS NOT FAIR

It is about vengeance which perpetuates the cycle of violence and suffering whereas, on the contrary, justice aims to put the situation right. Use of the death penalty therefore weakens the very concept of justice in the countries which practice it.

On 15 April 2014 in Iran, Samereh Alineja moved the entire world when she took off the rope from around the neck of her son's murderer: "The murderer was crying", she recalled. "He asked for forgiveness. I slapped him and that calmed me down. I said: I punish you for the misfortune you have brought me." Then she took the rope from around the prisoner's neck, thereby signifying her forgiveness.

IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF CASES, THE DEATH PENALTY IS USED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE VIOLENT STRUGGLE AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING

70 % of executions across the world. And yet, this method has proved to be inefficient, as the UN finally admitted after years of an aggressive War on Drugs. All these executions most often involve tiny amounts of drugs.

Chijioke Stephen Obioah, a 38-year-old Nigerian, was executed in 2016 by the Singapore justice system for the possession of 2.6kg of cannabis. The banks of Singapore, on the other hand, known for being the hub of the world's dirty drug money, do not lament any executions.

THE DEATH PENALTY IS CRUEL, INHUMAN AND DEGRADING

A punishment which rules out any hope is, in reality, torture. Prisoners sentenced to death live in constant fear of being killed and this perpetual terror often lasts 20 or 30 years. In a number of countries, they are often kept in isolation throughout that time, live in conditions of extreme deprivation and are tortured.

In 2016, the execution date for Tommy Arthur, sentenced to death in Alabama, was postponed at the last minute for the 7th time in 15 years. He has therefore spent his last night on earth 7 times, has said goodbye to his family 7 times and has experienced the terror of his imminent execution 7 times.

THE DEATH PENALTY KILLS INNOCENT PEOPLE.

It is applied differently depending on the degree of corruption within the police and the local justice system, the vagaries of investigations and local issues. Of the 156 prisoners sentenced to death and exonerated in the United States since 1976, 56% had been found guilty on the basis of false witness statements, 36% because of false eye witnesses and in 46% of cases the behaviour of the investigators was to blame. How many were not exonerated in time, in the United States and the rest of the world?

Teng Xingshan was executed in China in 1989 for the murder and rape of a woman who had disappeared. But this woman finally reappeared in 1993. Too late for the life of Teng Xingshan.

THE DEATH PENALTY IS A TOOL OF POLITICAL REPRESSION

Most of the countries which use capital punishment can't resist making it a tool of political and/or religious repression. No demonstrations, no going against government policy when just giving your opinion is enough to put a noose around your neck.

Ahmed Haou, who spent 15 years on death row in Morocco, was sentenced for protesting against the regime of King Hassan II and writing a slogan on a wall. Since Independence, 54 people have been executed in Morocco, mainly for political reasons.

THE DEATH PENALTY IS DISCRIMINATORY

Across the world, the death penalty is used against people belonging to a stigmatised minority in particular (migrants, homosexuals, ethnic or religious groups, people with mental illnesses, etc.)

Mahdi Rezaii, aged 17, was sentenced to death in July 2008 in Iran for homosexual acts. In 2016, 12 countries still sentenced homosexuals to death.

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THE DEATH PENALTY IS NOT ONLY USED FOR VIOLENT CRIME

And sometimes what is considered a crime in some countries is not even an offence in others. Thus, sodomy, adultery, blasphemy and apostasy are recognised as reasons justifying capital punishment in several countries.

Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, an Iranian citizen, was sentenced to death by flagellation for adultery in 2006. Extensive international mobilisation finally resulted in his release in 2014. Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian sentenced to death for wondering out loud if God though that Christians contaminated the water of Muslims by drinking from the same source, is still in prison awaiting execution.

THE DEATH PENALTY TARGETS THE POOR, THE ILLITERATE AND THOSE UNABLE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES

Those facing the death penalty who come from very poor backgrounds and have little education, must deal with two problems: the financial ability to defend themselves and the intellectual ability to understand what is at stake in their trial – as well as how the justice system works – and to respond to it appropriately in terms of behaviour and defence.

In the United States, Roger McGowenn witnessed his court-appointed lawyer – a notorious alcoholic – fall asleep several times during his trial. Roger McGowenn was sentenced to death because he didn't have the means to pay for a lawyer himself.

THE DEATH PENALTY IS A DENIAL OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S ABILITY TO BE REHABILITATED

Criminals who suffer from mental illnesses must be looked after in appropriate places. For others, a useful life in society is still possible.

"I decided that I would not be a useless person in this world. To become someone useful for my country, I needed to study too. So I joined the prison school and worked for a correspondence law degree from the University of London. Next, I want to get my Master's degree and work with an organisation which looks after the children of prisoners." Suzan Kigula, previously sentenced to death in Uganda.

THE DEATH PENALTY CREATES NEW VICTIMS

Without relieving the suffering of the victims of the first crime, death sentences extend that suffering and trauma to the families of the prisoners sentenced to death.

"I had to explain to my grandchildren that their mother had been sentenced to death. The oldest is 14. He is finding school difficult because his classmates tease him. His work is going downhill, he is destroyed, he is suffering." Celia Veloso, mother of Marie-Jane Veloso, sentenced to death in Indonesia.



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