

## Tekst 12



**Amnesty International**  
Website Against the Death Penalty

[Current Information](#)

[Documents on the Death Penalty](#)

[Other WWW Sites](#)

## Facts and Figures on the Death Penalty

Last updated : 16 November 2000

### 1. Abolitionist and Retentionist Countries

Over half the countries in the world have now abolished the death penalty in law or practice.

### 2. Progress Towards Worldwide Abolition

More than **three** countries a year on average have abolished the death penalty for all crimes in the past decade.

Over **30** countries and territories have abolished the death penalty for all crimes since 1990. They include countries in **Africa** (examples include Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa), the **Americas** (Canada, Paraguay), **Asia** (Hong Kong, Nepal), **Europe** (Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Poland, Turkmenistan, Ukraine).

### 3. Moves to Reintroduce the Death Penalty

Once abolished, the death penalty is seldom reintroduced. Since 1985, over **40** countries have abolished the death penalty in law or, having previously abolished it for ordinary crimes, have gone on to abolish it for all crimes. During the same period only **four** abolitionist countries reintroduced the death penalty. One of them – Nepal – has since abolished the death penalty again; one, the Philippines, has resumed executions, but there have been no executions in the other two (Gambia, Papua New Guinea).

### 4. Death Sentences and Executions

During 1999, at least 1,813 prisoners were executed in 31 countries and 3,857 people were sentenced to death in 64 countries. These figures include only cases known to Amnesty International; the true figures are certainly higher.

In 1999, 85 per cent of all known executions took place in China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the USA. In China, the limited records available to Amnesty International at the end of the year indicated that at least 1,077 people were executed, but the true figure was believed to be much higher. At least 165 executions were carried out in Iran. As many as 100 people

were executed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo after being sentenced to death by a military court. In Saudi Arabia, 103 executions were reported, but the total may have been much higher. Ninety-eight people were executed in the USA. In addition, hundreds of executions were reported in Iraq, but many of them may have been extrajudicial.

## 5. Use of the Death Penalty Against Child Offenders

International human rights treaties prohibit anyone under 18 years old at the time of the crime being sentenced to death. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child all have provisions to this effect. More than **110** countries whose laws still provide for the death penalty for at least some offences have laws specifically excluding the execution of child offenders or may be presumed to exclude such executions by being parties to one or another of the above treaties. A small number of countries, however, continue to execute child offenders.

**Six** countries since 1990 are known to have executed prisoners who were under 18 years old at the time of the crime – Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, USA and Yemen. The country which carried out the greatest number of known executions of child offenders was the USA (**13** since 1990).

## 6. The Deterrence Argument

Scientific studies have consistently failed to find convincing evidence that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other punishments. The most recent survey of research findings on the relation between the death penalty and homicide rates, conducted for the United Nations in 1988 and updated in 1996, concluded: “Research has failed to provide scientific proof that executions have a greater deterrent effect than life imprisonment and such proof is unlikely to be forthcoming. The evidence as a whole still gives no positive support to the deterrent hypothesis...”

(Reference: Roger Hood, *The Death Penalty: A World-wide Perspective*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, revised edition, 1996, p. 238, paragraph 328)

## 7. Execution of the Innocent

As long as the death penalty is maintained, the risk of executing the innocent can never be eliminated.

Since 1973 more than **85** US prisoners have been released from death row after evidence emerged of their innocence of the crimes for which they were sentenced to death. Some had come close to execution after spending many years under sentence of death. Recurring features in their cases include prosecutorial or police misconduct; the use of unreliable witness testimony, physical evidence, or confessions; and inadequate defence representation. Other US prisoners have gone to their deaths despite serious doubts over their guilt.

The Governor of the US state of Illinois, George Ryan, declared a moratorium on executions in January 2000. His decision followed the exoneration of the **13th** death row prisoner found to have been wrongfully convicted in the state since the USA reinstated the death penalty in 1977. During the same period, **12** other Illinois prisoners had been executed.

Announcing the moratorium, Governor Ryan said: “I cannot support a system which, in its administration, has proven so fraught with error and has come so close to the ultimate nightmare, the state’s taking of innocent life... Until I can be sure that everyone sentenced to death in Illinois is truly guilty, until I can be sure with moral certainty that no innocent man or woman is facing a lethal injection, no one will meet that fate.”

[About Al](#)

[Campaigns](#)

[Act Now](#)

[Library](#)

[News](#)

[Bazaar](#)

[Links](#)

*Lees bij de volgende vragen steeds eerst de opgave voordat je de bijbehorende tekst raadpleegt.*

## ■ Tekst 12 Amnesty International

Je bent benieuwd of het hanteren van de doodstraf wel of geen effect heeft op het terugdringen van de misdaad.

1p **38**  Geeft de tekst daar informatie over? Zo ja, onder welk kopje?

Je wilt weten hoeveel mensen in de Verenigde Staten ten onrechte ter dood gebracht zijn.

1p **39**  Blijkt uit de tekst om hoeveel mensen het gaat? Zo ja, om hoeveel mensen gaat het?