

THE WORLD IS ABANDONNING THE DEATH PENALTY

More than 70% of the world's countries have abolished capital punishment in law or practice. The U.S. is an outlier among its close allies in its continued use of the death penalty.

THE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE

- The United States is among the top 10 most active executioners in the world. Only China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, and Somalia carried out more documented executions than the U.S. in 2024. Four countries had an unknown number of executions: Syria, Afghanistan, North Korea, and Viet Nam.
- Out of 199 countries, 145 countries, or 73%, are abolitionist in law or in practice, while just 54 countries retain the death penalty.
- In 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for a moratorium on the death penalty. Since that time, the UN has approved new versions of this resolution with its most recent vote on December 17, 2024 receiving 130 votes in favor, 32 against, and 22 abstentions. The United States, along with Iran, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, China, and Vietnam, voted no.
- Ninety-two countries have signed onto the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989. It provides for the total abolition of the death penalty but allows states parties to retain the death penalty in time of war if they make a reservation to that effect at the time of ratifying or acceding to the Protocol.

The U.S. is an international outlier when it comes to the death penalty. Learn more at enddeathpenalty.org.