

Jordan - UN Universal Periodic Review – 31st session of the Working Group UPR- November 2018

The Advocates for Human Rights in partnership with The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, The Arab Coalition Against the Death Penalty, and The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty submitted a stakeholder report on the Death Penalty in Jordan to the thirty-first Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. The report outlines human rights violations in Jordan in the context of the death penalty and individuals charged with capital crimes.

Despite the adoption of a de facto moratorium on the death penalty from 2006–2014, Jordan continues to impose and carry out death sentences. Justifications for the resumption of the death penalty included rising crime rates, terrorism in the region, and public support for the death penalty. The death penalty is permitted for a variety of crimes that do not involve intentional killing, including rape, drug trafficking, and political crimes. The government has resisted all efforts by NGOs to develop and carry out any public awareness-raising campaigns regarding the death penalty, as it relies on widespread public support for the death penalty as a justification against abolition.

People accused of crimes that may result in the death penalty are often denied a fair trial, and interrogations may be conducted without access to legal counsel. Coerced confessions including use of torture are frequently used to obtain convictions, especially in the context of military tribunals. Foreign suspects are forced to sign documents written in Arabic without access to translation. There are also serious concerns about the conditions of detention; death row prisoners are held in solitary confinement, and prison reports indicate a lack of food, health care, and other necessities. Allegations of torture and prisoner mistreatment by guards are widespread.

Recommendations

- Amend the laws to ensure that the death penalty is available as a punishment only for the “most serious crimes” as stated in article 6 of the ICCPR, defined as crimes in which the defendant has committed an intentional killing.
- Prohibit the use in trial of any confession extracted through torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.
- Eliminate the use of solitary confinement as a condition of detention by virtue of a sentence of death, and restrict the use of solitary confinement to the conditions set forth in the Nelson Mandela Rules.
- Adopt a comprehensive public awareness-raising campaign, in collaboration with civil society, to educate the public about international human rights standards and alternatives to the death penalty, including as they pertain to Sharia law.