
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

United Nations General Assembly: Second resolution on moratorium on executions



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Over one hundred countries voted overwhelmingly in favour of a second resolution on "Moratorium on the use of the death penalty" at the United Nations (UN) on 18 December 2008. The resolution, reaffirming last year's UN General Assembly call for a moratorium on executions, is non-binding on states and was co-sponsored by 89 states from around the world.

106 states¹ supported the resolution, 46 voted against and 34 states abstained. In 2007, the vote was 104 in favour, 54 against and 29 abstained.

The increase in the number of votes in favour or abstentions is indicative of the worldwide trend towards abolition of the death penalty. In the Arab League Bahrain, Jordan, Oman, Mauritania and the United Arab Emirates, abstained rather than voting no.

Similarly, in November 2008, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission) adopted a resolution calling on African States to observe a moratorium on the death penalty. It is an important step towards making the African Union (AU) a totally death penalty-free zone.

The text of UNGA resolution 63/168 is as follows:

"The General Assembly,
Reaffirming its resolution 62/149 of 18 December 2007 on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty,
Welcoming the decisions taken by an increasing number of States to apply a moratorium on executions and the global trend towards the abolition of the death penalty,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 62/149,¹ and the conclusions and recommendations contained therein;
2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide a report on progress made in

¹ After the vote, the representative of Ethiopia noted that his delegation had mistakenly voted in favour, whereas it had meant to vote against the resolution.

the implementation of resolution 62/149 and the present resolution, for consideration during its sixty-fifth session, and calls upon Member States to provide the Secretary-General with information in this regard;

3. *Decides* to continue consideration of the matter at its sixty-fifth session under the item entitled “Promotion and protection of human rights”.”

The voting list is the following:

In favour(106): Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela.

Against(46): Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, China, Comoros, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Dominica, Egypt, Grenada, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Swaziland, Syria, Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United States, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Abstain(34): Bahrain, Belarus, Bhutan, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cuba, Djibouti, Eritrea, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Suriname, Togo, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia.

Absent(6): Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Kiribati, Seychelles, Tunisia.