



Response to the Call for Inputs for the Secretary-General’s report on the question of the death penalty:

The human rights of children of parents sentenced to death or executed

for the

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Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights

a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1996

Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Masyarakat

The Maldivian Democracy Network

The Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty

Avocats Sans Frontières France

Center for Prisoners’ Rights Japan

The Coalition of Somali Human Rights Defenders

Floridians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Hope Behind Bars Africa

Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network

Foundation for Human Rights Initiative

Center for Legal Support & Inmates’ Rehabilitation

and

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty

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The Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law since its founding in 1983. The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publication. The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States. The Advocates is committed to ensuring human rights protection for women around the world. The Advocates has published more than 25 reports on violence against women as a human rights issue, provided consultation and commentary of draft laws on domestic violence, and trained lawyers, police, prosecutors, judges, and other law enforcement personnel to effectively implement new and existing laws on domestic violence. In 1991, The Advocates adopted a formal commitment to oppose the death penalty worldwide and

organized a death penalty project to provide pro bono assistance on post-conviction appeals, as well as education and advocacy to end capital punishment. The Advocates currently holds a seat on the Steering Committee of the World Coalition against the Death Penalty.

Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Masyarakat (LBH Masyarakat/Community Legal Aid Institute) is a not-for-profit non-governmental organization that provides free legal services for the poor and victims of human rights abuses; undertakes community legal empowerment for marginalized groups; and advocates for law reform and human rights protection through campaigns, strategic litigation, policy advocacy, research, and analysis. LBH Masyarakat advocates for the abolition of the death penalty and defends the rights of people facing the death penalty or executions.

The Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN) is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation advocating for human rights and democracy in the Maldives. MDN was formed in 2004, allowed to register in the Maldives in 2006, and arbitrarily shut down following blasphemy allegations by the Government of Maldives in 2019. MDN currently works in exile.

The Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty (TAEDP) is the first coalition in Taiwan dedicated to abolishing the death penalty and promoting reform of the criminal justice system. Established in 2003, it brings together abolitionist groups, NGOs, and research institutes. TAEDP works on individual capital cases, monitors trial procedures to safeguard fair trial rights, and campaigns to prevent wrongful executions. The organization also provides training and seminars for criminal defense lawyers. Beyond capital punishment, TAEDP advocates for victims' rights and stronger support systems for those affected by serious crimes. It engages the public through forums, seminars, and educational programs developed in collaboration with teachers.

Avocats Sans Frontières France (Lawyers Without Borders France) is an international non-governmental organization dedicated to defending human rights and promoting access to justice for the most vulnerable populations. Since 2011, ASF France has been working for the abolition of the death penalty in Nigeria. Through legal aid, capacity building, and advocacy, ASF France works to strengthen the rule of law and reform in the use of the capital punishment in the country.

The **Center for Prisoners' Rights Japan** (CPR) was established in March 1995 as the first Japanese NGO specializing in prison reform. CPR's goal is to reform Japanese prison conditions in accordance with international human rights standards and to abolish the death penalty. CPR is a member organization of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty.

The **Coalition of Somali Human Rights Defenders** (CSHRD) is a civil society network dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights defenders and vulnerable communities in Somalia. Its work aligns with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to gender equality, justice, peace, and inclusive societies. Through advocacy, documentation, protection initiatives, and partnerships, CSHRD strengthens civic space and supports accountability and human rights protection in Somalia.

Floridians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty works for restorative justice in the form of effective alternatives to the death penalty. FADP works to build and mobilize public and political support for abolition using a coordinated, strategic, and empowerment-oriented approach

incorporating a broad network of individual Floridians, murder victims' family members and other survivors of violent crime, law enforcement professionals, families of the incarcerated, and death row exonerees.

Hope Behind Bars Africa (HBBA) is a women-led, human rights-focused social enterprise and non-governmental organisation based in Nigeria, operating in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 2021. Founded in 2018, HBBA works to close the justice gap for marginalised populations, with a particular focus on people from low socio-economic backgrounds who are at risk of or currently facing incarceration. HBBA conducts research, advocacy, and legal support, and develops evidence-based interventions to improve access to justice. HBBA provides direct representation to women on death row, ensuring that they have access to fair trials, legal counsel, and support during appeals and clemency processes. The organisation also offers psycho-social support, rehabilitation programs, and reintegration assistance to women in conflict with the law, addressing their specific needs and promoting holistic reformation.

Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN) is the peak regional body for organisations committed to the abolition of the death penalty across Asia-Pacific, with members from 20 countries within the region. As such, ADPAN maintains that the death penalty violates the right to life, that it is the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment and that the death penalty should be entirely abolished internationally.

The **Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI)** is an independent, non-governmental, non-partisan and not-for-profit human rights advocacy organization, registered in Uganda under the Non-Governmental Organizations Act, 2016. FHRI's vision is a society based on human rights and civic culture as a foundation for peace, stability, democracy, social justice and sustainable development. FHRI's Mission is to promote respect and observance of human rights practices and civic values, enhance best practices through training, education, research, advocacy, ICTs, and strategic partnership. The organization has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, is a member of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (Paris) and is affiliated to the International Federation of Human Rights Defenders, (FIDH) in Paris, France. It is a membership organization with a total of 1,515 members. FHRI commands a 30-year experience and expertise in human rights activism in Uganda. FHRI has been at the forefront in monitoring and documenting human rights violations, publication of periodic human rights reports, legal aid service provision to victims of human rights abuse; reporting before regional human rights treaty bodies, the Judiciary, parliament, police and actively campaigns for the abolition of the death penalty including carrying out programs that promote citizen participation and state accountability. Currently, it is spearheading five campaigns namely, *My Rights, My Power, Access to Justice, Rights and Rule of Law, Freedom from Pre-trial detention, and the Campaign against the death penalty in Uganda*. FHRI is located at the Human Rights House, Plot 1853, John Kiyingi Road, Nsambya, Kampala Uganda.

The **Center for Legal Support and Inmates' Rehabilitation (CELSIR)** is a social enterprise organization dedicated to advancing access to justice for indigent persons and victims of human rights violations. Through legal aid, paralegal training, prison-based legal empowerment programs, and advocacy on sentencing reform and the death penalty, CELSIR works to strengthen fair trial rights, promote humane justice systems, and support the rehabilitation and reintegration of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated persons.

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty is a membership-based global network committed to strengthening the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Established in 2002, its ultimate objective is to obtain the universal abolition of the death penalty. To achieve its goal, the World Coalition advocates for a definitive end to death sentences and executions in those countries where the death penalty is in force. In some countries, it is seeking to obtain a reduction in the use of capital punishment as a first step towards abolition.

1. This report responds to a call for inputs to assist the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in preparing the Secretary-General’s report on the question of the death penalty for the 63rd session of the Human Rights Council. As requested, the report focuses on the human rights of children of parents sentenced to death or executed. The report incorporates responses to a March 2026 survey of members of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty.
2. In a report submitted last month to the Special Rapporteur on executions, The Advocates for Human Rights (TAHR), the Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty (TAEDP), and several other coauthors outlined the impact of the death penalty on families of people sentenced to death around the world.¹ TAEDP had monitored a capital trial during which the defendant’s children “experienced such severe psychological stress that the lawyers asked us to help arrange social worker and counseling resources for them.”² The report also outlines the stigma and marginalization that family members can face.³ The report also describes trauma specific to children of people sentenced to death for killing other family members.⁴ For example, in some jurisdictions that apply *qisas* (retribution in kind) systems under an interpretation of Islamic law, the children of a murder victim can face the traumatic burden of deciding whether their surviving parent should be executed for killing their other parent.⁵ So a child who witnessed their father carry out long-term abuse of their mother must decide whether their mother should die for killing him.⁶ In Iran, authorities sometimes call on children to carry out the executions themselves.⁷
3. In a 2026 report, LBH Masyarakat documents the effects of the death penalty on the children of women sentenced to death in Indonesia.⁸ For example, women on death row with minor children face particular challenges related to the caregiving they must delegate to other family members.
4. According to the Adaleh Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS), Jordanian law exempts pregnant women from execution until three months after childbirth. ACHRS reports that authorities may commute the death penalty under clemency rules or special circumstances. ACHRS observes that these practices reflect a trend toward mitigating the death sentence in exceptional circumstances.
5. World Coalition member Center for Legal Support and Inmates’ Rehabilitation (CELSIR), based in Kenya, reports that there is substantial documentation highlighting the severe and multifaceted impacts on children when a parent is sentenced to death or executed. CELSIR highlights emotional trauma, stigma, discrimination, threats to the right to an adequate standard

¹ The Advocates for Human Rights et al., *The Impact of the Death Penalty on Families of People Sentenced to Death: Objective 5*, 28 Feb. 2026, https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/International_Submissions/A/Index?id=650.

² *Id.* ¶ 7.

³ *Id.* ¶¶ 21-29.

⁴ *Id.* ¶¶ 30-32.

⁵ *Id.* ¶ 32.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ LBH Masyarakat, *Accumulated Suffering Under Relational Punishment: A Portrait of the Lives of Six Women on Death Row and Their Families*, 2026, at 31-34, <https://lbhmasyarakat.org/files/Accumulated%20Suffering%20Under%20Relational%20Punishment%20A%20Potrait%20of%20The%20Lives%20of%20Six%20Women%20on%20Death%20Row%20and%20Their%20Families.pdf>.

of living, harm to the child’s psychological wellbeing, and obstacles to social development. Kenya’s Children Act includes the best interests of the child as a core principle, but authorities do not adequately protect those interests when a parent faces the death penalty. Such children experience a heightened risk of psychological harm, social exclusion, and economic hardship. CELSIR emphasizes the urgency of adopting explicitly policies and protective natures to safeguard the rights and welfare of such children in Kenya.

6. In a 2025 report, The Advocates for Human Rights (TAHR) and Legal Awareness Watch – Pakistan (LAW) cited a report stating that at least 140 children younger than age 6 are living in 45 prisons across Punjab, Pakistan with their incarcerated mothers.⁹ A psychologist has explained the developmental harms these children can experience due to the harsh detention conditions.¹⁰ It is not clear how many of these women are under sentence of death, but detention conditions for women on death row and their children are worse than in the general prison population.¹¹ For children living separate from their parent on death row, prisons strictly limit communication and visits, and children often visit parents infrequently due to costly travel and bullying by the child’s peers.¹²
7. The Coalition of Somali Human Rights Defenders (CSHRD) reports that in Somalia, when authorities execute young parents, their children are left behind without legal protection, social support, or economic stability, and their children often face stigma within their communities.
8. TAEDP reports that 19 of the 35 people currently on death row in Taiwan had minor children at the time of their initial detention. Yet courts at the trial and appellate levels failed to implement requirements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to assess the extensive impact of the death penalty on families and children. The courts thereby exacerbated the marginalization and hardship that the children and their families faced. Prisons in Taiwan lack specific policies for family or child visitation. Authorities do not track the human rights needs or the welfare of the children of people sentenced to death. TAEDP reports that three people currently charged with capital crimes have minor children, and as those cases are ongoing courts are consistently failing to take the best interests of the minor children into account as a factor at sentencing.
9. TAEDP recounts the case of Chen Chia-ying, a woman who was charged with killing a police officer by dragging him with her car after attempting to evade a drug-related roadside check. TAEDP says that in the past, prosecutors would not even seek the death penalty in such cases. While she was in the women’s detention center, she gave birth to a baby. The lay court delivered a rare death sentence in the first instance. She is the first woman to be sentenced to death since Taiwan implemented its lay judge system, and she is also the first woman to be sentenced to death while having a minor child.
10. In a December 2025 report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, TAHR, the World Coalition, and the Uganda-based Foundation for Human Rights Initiative described the

⁹ The Advocates for Human Rights, The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, and Legal Awareness Watch, *Pakistan’s Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child Alternative Report about the Impact of the Death Penalty on the Rights of Children*, Dec. 15, 2025, ¶ 76, https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/International_Submissions/A/Index?id=645.

¹⁰ *Id.* ¶¶ 76-85.

¹¹ *Id.* ¶ 81.

¹² *Id.* ¶¶ 83-84.

situation of children of women sentenced to death and subject to other extreme sentences in Uganda.¹³ The report explains that no women are currently under sentence of death in Uganda, but there are such women from time to time, and the report describes the effects of the death penalty on the children of those women.¹⁴ The report describes detention conditions for young children who live with their mothers in prison,¹⁵ including restrictions on their access to health care,¹⁶ inadequate food, sanitation, and clothing,¹⁷ and exposure to violence.¹⁸ The report also explains that women in detention are fearful that organizations seeking to take in their children for out-of-prison placements with “host families” will traffic their children to foreign countries.¹⁹

¹³ The Advocates for Human Rights, the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, and the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, *Uganda’s Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Children of Women in Detention*, Dec. 15, 2025,

https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/International_Submissions/A/Index?id=643.

¹⁴ *Id.* ¶¶ 1-2.

¹⁵ *Id.* ¶¶ 6-13.

¹⁶ *Id.* ¶¶ 14-19.

¹⁷ *Id.* ¶¶ 20-29.

¹⁸ *Id.* ¶¶ 30-33.

¹⁹ *Id.* ¶ 34.