



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

The rights of persons under 18 years of age at the time of the offense who face the death penalty

for the

**63rd Session of the Human Rights Council
September 2026**

Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights

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

**Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Masyarakat
Legal Awareness Watch**

The European Saudi Organization for Human Rights

The Maldivian Democracy Network

The Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty

Avocats Sans Frontières France

Abolition Death Penalty Iraq

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

Center for Legal Support & Inmates’ Rehabilitation

and

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty

Submitted 13 March 2026

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.

Legal Awareness Watch (LAW) is a volunteer-based nongovernmental organization that promotes and protects the rights of vulnerable individuals in Pakistan, particularly women and children facing life imprisonment or the death penalty. LAW provides pro bono legal defense, conducts awareness campaigns, and delivers training workshops on child justice to strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders. Through its advocacy and education initiatives, LAW works to end the use of the death penalty and life imprisonment for children and women and to advance fair and humane practices within Pakistan's justice system. LAW is a member of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty.

The European Saudi Organization for Human Rights (ESOHR) is a nonprofit organization establishment, established by a group of activists aiming to strengthen the commitment of human rights principles in Saudi Arabia. ESOHR vision is to expand the area of human rights in all fields in full measure, by working to urge the concerned as legislative or executive to activate it, raise awareness and empower citizens of their rights through education.

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.

Abolition Death Penalty of Iraq organization (OADPI) is an alliance of more than 160 NGOs, bar associations, local authorities and unions and was created in Rome on 13 May 2002. It was created as a result of the commitment made by the signatories of the Final Declaration of the 1st World Congress Against the Death Penalty organized by the French NGO Together Against the Death Penalty (ECPM) in Strasbourg in June 2001. The aim of the World Coalition is to strengthen the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Its 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.

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 **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 rights of persons under 18 years of age at the time of the offense who face the death penalty, incorporating responses to a March 2026 survey of members of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty. Additionally, during the reporting period the Committee on the Rights of the Child highlighted issues relating to children sentenced to death in Iraq,¹ Malaysia,² Pakistan,³ and Qatar.⁴
2. LBH Masyarakat reports that on 24 October 2024, the Indonesian Supreme Court set aside a death sentence imposed on a girl who had been 17 years and 8 months old at the time of trial. The lower court had convicted her of murder alongside her former husband, alleged to be the “mastermind” behind the crime. A survivor of child marriage, her husband had also subjected her to domestic violence and had threatened and coerced her into carrying out the crime. The Supreme Court reduced her sentence to 10 years’ imprisonment.⁵
3. Abolition Death Penalty of Iraq Organization and TAHR reported in 2025 that authorities in Iraq subject some child offenders to coerced confessions and limit their access to legal representation.⁶ Moreover, courts do not consistently make reliable age determinations, and in counterterrorism cases courts sometimes overlook protections for juvenile offenders.⁷
4. Kenya-based World Coalition member Center for Legal Support and Inmates’ Rehabilitation (CELSIR) reports that even though Kenyan law prohibits imposition of the death penalty on people who were under age 18 at the time of the offence, the alternative sentence of “detention at the President’s pleasure” in practice results in extremely long incarcerations. CELSIR reports that some people have been imprisoned for decades under this sentence without adequate review. CELSIR ultimately secured the release of one such man who had been detained for 36 years.
5. Similarly, the Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN) and TAHR reported in 2024 that Malaysia’s 2023 Resentencing Act does not apply to juvenile offenders convicted of an

¹ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Iraq*, (July 18, 2025), UN Doc. CRC/C/IRQ/CO/5-6, ¶¶ 21-22, 54.

² Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations on the combined second to fourth periodic reports of Malaysia*, (Feb. 26, 2026), UN Doc. CRC/C/MYS/CO/2-4, ¶¶ 29, 44, 76.

³ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Pakistan*, (Feb. 5, 2026), UN Doc. CRC/C/PAK/CO/6-7, ¶¶ 17-18, 30, 47-48.

⁴ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Qatar*, (July 11, 2025), UN Doc. CRC/C/QAT/CO/5-6, ¶¶ 22-23, 34, 51, 54.

⁵ See also LBH Masyarakat, *Accumulated Suffering Under Relational Punishment: A Portrait of the Lives of Six Women on Death Row and Their Families*, 2026, at 10,

<https://lbhmasyarakat.org/files/Accumulated%20Suffering%20Under%20Relational%20Punishment%20A%20Portrait%20of%20The%20Lives%20of%20Six%20Women%20on%20Death%20Row%20and%20Their%20Families.pdf>.

⁶ The Advocates for Human Rights, Abolition Death Penalty of Iraq Organization, and The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, *Iraq’s Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Alternative Report on the Death Penalty and Children in Conflict with the Law*, Apr. 15, 2025, ¶ 3,

https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/International_Submissions/A/Index?id=601.

⁷ *Ibid.*

otherwise death-eligible offense.⁸ Under the Child Act Section 97(3), these people are “detained in a prison during the pleasure of” the Ruler, which amounts to an indefinite natural life sentence.⁹ Because their sentence is neither death nor life imprisonment, seem to be ineligible for resentencing.¹⁰ These people wear special-colored jumpsuits labeled “juvenile,” regardless of their current age, and ADPAN reports that at least one such person has been held in detention for more than thirty years.¹¹

6. The Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN) and TAHR reported in 2025 that even though domestic laws in the Maldives are aligned with the prohibition against capital offences for juvenile offenders, in practice courts seem to be interpreting the law to allow a judge to sentence a juvenile offender to death, while requiring authorities to wait until the offender reaches the age of 18 to carry out the sentence.¹² According to MDN, on 11 July 2024, the Supreme Court concluded the case of a person whom a court had convicted and sentenced to death when he was a child. The person (who had since reached the age of 18) appealed his conviction because the mother of the victim had withdrawn the family’s wish for *qisas* (blood money) and had elected forgiveness. The State tried to quash the appeal, but the Supreme Court overturned the death sentence based on forgiveness. Importantly, the Court did not consider or reference the Child Rights Protection Act or the Juvenile Justice Act, which prohibit sentencing a minor to death. And MDN was able to access the trial report only because the person had reached the age of 18 at the time of appeal. Cases concerning minors are not disclosed publicly, so MDN has been unable to obtain any other information about how many minors have been sentenced to death in the Maldives.
7. Hope Behind Bars Africa reports that in November 2024, Nigerian authorities arrested 119 people, including 29 children aged 14 to 17, for their involvement in protests about Nigeria’s cost of living crisis. Authorities charged them with capital crimes such as treason, and human rights organizations are concerned that courts could sentence the children to death.¹³
8. In November 2025, The Advocates for Human Rights (TAHR) and Legal Awareness Watch – Pakistan (LAW) conducted a survey to gather insights from legal professionals in Pakistan regarding implementation of the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 (JJSA).¹⁴ While the JJSA prohibits courts from sentencing anyone to death for a crime they committed while under age

⁸ The Advocates for Human Rights, Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network, and The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, *Malaysia’s Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Suggested List of Issues Relating to the Death Penalty*, Nov. 1, 2024, ¶ 6,

https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/International_Submissions/A/Index?id=540.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The Advocates for Human Rights, Maldivian Democracy Network, and The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, *The Maldives’ Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Death Penalty*, Dec. 15, 2025, ¶ 9, https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/International_Submissions/A/Index?id=644.

¹³ Valerie Mayenga, *29 minors in Nigeria may face death penalty amid crackdown on protests*, Jurist News, Nov. 3, 2024, <https://www.jurist.org/news/2024/11/29-children-in-nigeria-likely-to-be-facing-a-death-penalty-following-months-of-political-unrest-and-protests/>.

¹⁴ 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, ¶ 19, https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/International_Submissions/A/Index?id=645.

18, the survey found that police and judges do not follow the JJSA's age determination procedures and that the medical examinations and medical opinions are of poor quality.¹⁵

9. The Coalition of Somali Human Rights Defenders (CSHRD) reports that since 1 July 2024, there have been documented cases of executions of people who were under age 18 at the time of their offences, particularly in the Puntland region of Somalia. On 17 August 2024, authorities executed 10 alleged Al-Shabaab members in Galkayo, and UN and UNICEF officials confirmed that four of them were under age 18 at the time of the alleged offenses. Military courts, which lack specialized child justice procedures, issued the convictions. Authorities carried out the executions despite the Puntland Age Verification Committee's findings that the individuals were minors at the time of arrest.¹⁶ According to CSHRD, Puntland's Juvenile Justice Act seems to conflict with the Puntland Anti-Terrorism Act, which authorities have used to justify prosecuting children. Somalia's legal landscape is complex, with parallel military, sharia, and federal legal systems. CSHRD reports that even though federal law prohibits the execution of children, practical application of that prohibition varies by state, particularly with military courts in regions like Puntland.
10. The Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty (TAEDP) reports that in February 2026, a court in Taiwan finalized a sentence of short-term imprisonment for a junior high school student who had been convicted in a throat-slitting case, but this case has sparked public debate about penalties for children who commit serious crimes. Some members of the public are calling on lawmakers to amend the Juvenile Justice Act and the Criminal Code to allow harsh sentences, perhaps including the death penalty, in such cases.

¹⁵ *Id.* ¶¶ 24-25, 31.

¹⁶ See also *UNICEF statement on execution of four youths in Puntland state, Somalia*, 22 August 2024, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-statement-execution-four-youths-puntland-state-somalia>.