

August 2, 2021

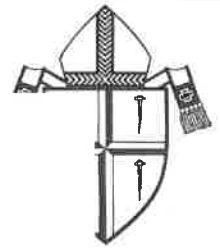
Death Penalty Facts and Figures

At least 2,307 death sentences were passed in 56 countries in 2019. But in some cases the death sentences will be commuted, where countries are reluctant to enforce the punishment.

In recent years the number of countries which carry out executions has gradually declined.

According to *Amnesty International*, a human rights organization there are:

- 106 countries where use of the death penalty is not allowed by law
- 8 countries which permit the death penalty only for serious crimes in exceptional circumstances, such as those committed during times of war
- 28 countries which have death penalty laws but haven't executed anyone for at least 10 years, and a policy or more formal commitment not to execute
- 56 countries which retain death penalty laws and either carry out executions or the authorities have not made an official declaration not to execute
- Official data isn't available out of China, where death penalty statistics are a state secret, but it is estimated it carried out thousands of executions in 2019. China consistently executes more people than any other country.
- Excluding China, three countries were responsible for more than 80% of executions - Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran.
- Since 2013, 33 countries have carried out at least one execution.
- Saudi Arabia was the only country to list beheading as the method of execution.
- Other methods included hanging, lethal injection and shooting.
- In the US, six states carried out executions by lethal injection in 2019, and one state (Tennessee) used electrocution.
- In total 25 people were executed in the US in 2019, and for the 11th consecutive year it was the only country in the Americas to implement the death penalty.



Peace, and Justice

The death penalty, is a legal penalty in the United States, with it being a legal punishment in 27 states, the federal government, and the military. Although it is a legal penalty in 27 states, only 21 states have the ability to execute death sentences, with the other 6, as well as the federal government, being subject to different types of moratoria.

The death penalty is still a legal form of punishment in California. Since March 2019 there has been a moratorium on executions in California. The last execution in California took place in 2006. There are currently 701 condemned inmates (on death row) in California.

The Catechism—the Catholic Church’s official compilation of teachings on a wide range of issues—was revised on August 2, 2018 to unambiguously oppose capital punishment. The new version of **Catechism No. 2267** also committed the Church to work “with determination” to abolish the death penalty worldwide.

- *2267. Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good.*
- *Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption. Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that “the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person”, and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.*