



Bahrain - Public Appeal: United Nations' General Assembly's December 2022 resolution on the death penalty

To: Their Excellencies, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa; Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa; Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani and Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Waqf (Endowments), Nawaf bin Mohammed Al Maawda and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Mr. Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri, Bahrain's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva;

Copies sent to: His Excellency Ambassador Jamal Al-Rowaie, Bahrain's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, and Eng. Ali Alderazi, the Chairperson of Bahrain's National Institute for Human Rights

6 December 2022

Your Excellencies,

We write to you today regarding the "*Moratorium on the use of the death penalty*" resolution, which is due to be considered at the 77th session of the United Nations' General Assembly (UNGA) in December 2022.

We call on the Government of Bahrain to vote **for** the resolution at the UNGA vote.

While scores of legal provisions provide for the death penalty in Bahrain, it would be in the best interest of Bahrain to now show leadership and vote in favour of the Resolution.

There are at least 27 individuals on death row in Bahrain, nearly all of whom are at risk of imminent execution, pending only His Excellency, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's ratification. Human rights groups and bodies allege that unfair trials, as well as those in which torture and coercion took place, have resulted in the wrongful imposition of the death penalty in at least [eight](#) instances.

Since an execution is irreversible, such flaws call into question the justice of the death penalty, especially in a context in which the government asserts it respects international human rights standards.

On the eight occasions since 2007 when the UNGA has debated and voted to suspend the implementation of the death penalty, in half of them the GoB has abstained (2008, 2010, 2014, 2016). For seven years, between 2011-2017, the GoB maintained a de facto moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty. Over the past three years, no executions have taken place. A vote in favour of the

resolution would be consistent with the situation in Bahrain, while an abstention is the very least the government should do.

There is growing internal debate and disquiet in Bahrain, amongst the population, civil society and lawyers about the use of the punishment, and public concerns over the administration of justice in cases which have resulted in death penalty convictions. Growing domestic calls for Bahrain to impose a moratorium on the use of the death penalty mirrors the growing international trend towards ending the use of the death penalty.

In a [report](#) dated November 2022, on the occasion of the Fourth Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a UN human rights mechanism under the auspices of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Bahrain's own National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) stated that it "calls and strives for the implementation of the United Nations resolution for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty".

The eight resolutions that the UNGA has adopted since 2007 on this issue have enjoyed a wide and cross-regional support, in their expression of concern at the continued application of the death penalty. The overall number of votes in favour of these resolutions has risen from 104 in 2007 to 123 of the UN's 193 member states, 63% of the world, in 2020. The number of countries classified as abolitionist for all crimes has, in fact, also grown from 90 in 2007 to 111 in [2021](#). In 2020 and again 2021, executions were recorded in a minority of countries – 18 in total.

In respect to member states of the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in 2007, 15 member states voted in favour of the resolution; in 2020, a total of 26 of the OIC's 57 member states supported the resolution. By 2021, 20 OIC member states had abolished the death penalty for all crimes or for ordinary crimes.

As civil society organizations, we value the opportunity for informed debates on the issue of the death penalty, which these resolutions offer us every two years. The calls contained in the resolutions suggest several ways in the journey that states can undertake towards reducing the death penalty and end its implementation, including by recalling critical restrictions to its use set out by the international community over several decades.

Once again, we call on the Government of Bahrain to vote **for** the resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty in December 2022 at the UNGA.

Yours sincerely,

Bahrain Centre for Human Rights - Director, Nedal AlSalman

Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort, ECPM (Together against the death penalty) - Director, Raphaël Chenuil-Hazan

Salam for Democracy and Human Rights - Director, Jawad Fairouz

The Advocates for Human Rights - Associate Program Director, International Justice Program, Amy Bergquist

World Coalition Against the Death Penalty - President, Matthew Goldberg