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## Capital Punishment Practices Report in the Arab World January 2026

Despite the global movement toward abolition, capital punishment continues to be imposed and implemented in several countries across the region. The developments recorded in Egypt, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia during the first month of 2026 reflect the ongoing reliance on capital punishment for a range of offenses, as well as the procedural and legal mechanisms that advance death sentences toward implementation. This report provides a factual overview of these practices at the start of the year.

### Egypt

Egypt, a retentionist state, in 2026, continues to impose and implement the death penalty. In January 2026 alone, Egyptian courts issued death sentences against 29 defendants across 19 separate cases. Of these, three judgments were final and no longer subject to appeal. During the same month, the cases of 48 individuals, sentenced in 28 separate cases from previous years, were referred to the Grand Mufti for consultative review, a mandatory procedural step under Egyptian law prior to the issuance of a final death sentence. By the end of January, five executions had been carried out. The number of executions is likely to increase in the coming months should the pending cases proceed following the Mufti's opinion.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note the lack of transparency surrounding executions. In many cases, authorities did not issue clear or timely public announcements. As a result, information is gathered from multiple sources, including local media, human rights documentation, and testimonies from the families of those executed.

### Iraq

In early 2026, Iraq announced the execution of Saadoun Sabri al-Qaisi, a former senior security official under the regime of Saddam Hussein. Al-Qaisi had been convicted of grave crimes against humanity, including involvement in the execution of the Shi'a religious leader Mohammed al-Sadr.

Although the execution was publicly announced on 9 February 2026, it is believed that the execution itself took place in January 2026.

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<sup>1</sup> [Infographic | Death Penalty in Egypt during January 2026 | Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights](#)

In addition, Iraq's criminal courts issued 17 death sentences, including three for women. One of these sentences was for murder, while the remaining 16 were for drug-trafficking offenses.

### **Saudi Arabia**

By January 2026, the Saudi Press Agency had announced the execution of 31 individuals in Saudi Arabia. This reflects an execution rate of approximately 1.03 executions per day, exceeding the 2025 annual average of 0.97 executions per day, during which the country carried out a record 356 executions.

Of the 31 executions reported in January, 25 (approximately 80%) were imposed under discretionary (*Ta'zir*) sentencing. The majority of those executed (18 of 31) were convicted of drug trafficking offenses, while six individuals were executed for terrorism-related offenses not resulting in death. Five individuals were executed for aggravated murder or murder under "*Qisas*" and "*Hadd*" sentencing. One additional execution was carried out for armed burglary not resulting in death.

Notably, the Saudi Press Agency does not publish announcements concerning the implementation of death sentences on the English version of its official website. Such announcements appear to be issued exclusively in Arabic.

In particular, Saudi Arabia is not a State Party to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is dedicated to the abolition of the death penalty.

### **Sources:**

- Egypt

[Infographic | Death Penalty in Egypt during January 2026 | Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights](#)

- Iraq

[Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq 05/ Jan / 2026](#)

[Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq 20/ Jan / 2026](#)

[Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq 21/ Jan / 2026](#)

[Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq 25/ Jan / 2026](#)

- Saudi Arabia

[04/Jan/2026 Saudi Press Agency](#)

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