

Date: 10 October 2026

Prepared by Amina Alayout

On the occasion of the World Day Against the Death Penalty, 10 October, the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS), the Jordanian Coalition Against the Death Penalty (JCADP) and the Arab Coalition Against the Death Penalty (ACADP) reaffirm their firm opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances.

Human rights continue to advance, and today the struggle increasingly focuses on social and economic rights. Yet none of these rights can be enjoyed without the right to life, which is the precondition for all others. The death penalty denies this right outright. It is an irreversible violation of human dignity that undermines the work done to build every other right.

According to Amnesty International, more than two-thirds of the world's countries have now abolished the death penalty in law or in practice. Yet executions are rising sharply among the small group of states that still carry them out. At least 2,707 people were executed in 17 countries in 2025, a 78% increase on 2024 and the highest figure recorded since 1981 and close to half of all known executions were for drug-related offences, in breach of international law.¹

While the world is moving towards abolition, the Middle East and North Africa is moving in both directions. On 11 August 2026, Lebanon abolished the death penalty and replaced it with life imprisonment with hard labour, becoming the first country in the Middle East to formally abolish capital punishment.²

Other states are moving in the opposite direction. On 30 March 2026, Israel adopted a law on the death penalty for "terrorists" whose wording makes clear that it will apply primarily, if not exclusively, to Palestinians. Human rights organizations and several governments have denounced it as discriminatory.³

On 1 October 2026, Algeria's National People's Assembly voted to extend the death penalty to deliberate forest and field fires and to child abductions involving serious violence, even though the country has observed a moratorium on executions since 1993.⁴

Jordan is unfortunately part of this regressive trend. On 21 June 2026, the authorities hanged six men in a single morning, ending a de facto moratorium on executions in place since March 2017. The six had been convicted by the State Security Court of terrorism and drug-trafficking offences that caused the deaths of members of the security forces.⁵

¹Amnesty International (2026). *Death Sentences and Executions 2025*. ACT 50/0778/2026. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/0778/2026/en/>

²Associated Press (2026, 11 August). *Lebanon abolishes death penalty in landmark parliament vote*. <https://abcnews.com/International/wireStory/lebanon-abolishes-death-penalty-landmark-parliament-vote-135539953>

³Human Rights Watch (2026, 31 March). *Israel: Discriminatory Death Penalty Bill Passes*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/03/31/israel-discriminatory-death-penalty-bill-passes>

⁴BBC News (2026, 1 October). *Algeria introduces death penalty for arsonists after deadly wildfires*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cmge4exg44v5o>

⁵Human Rights Watch (2026, 23 June). *6 Executed as Jordan Resumes Death Penalty*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/06/23/6-executed-as-jordan-resumes-death-penalty>

Since reinstating the death penalty in December 2014, Jordan has carried out executions only sporadically. Courts, however, never stopped handing down death sentences during the moratorium. The National Center for Human Rights reported 284 people under sentence of death in 2023 and 276 in 2024, including 22 women.⁶ Each of them now faces the threat of execution. On the day of the 2026 executions, Prime Minister Jafar Hassan announced plans to amend the law so that major drug traffickers and smugglers linked to external networks would face the death penalty.⁷ We deeply regret this decision. For nine years, Jordan stood apart in the region by refraining from executions. Returning to the gallows, and planning to widen the scope of capital crimes, is a serious step backwards.

Across the region and beyond, renewed "tough on crime" approaches, especially in the war on drugs, are driving the rise in executions. The death penalty is increasingly presented as the answer to insecurity, rising crime and threats to national unity. We firmly reject this narrative. There is no evidence that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other punishments. National cohesion cannot be built on executions: it rests on respect for the rights of every person and, above all, on social and economic conditions that address the root causes of crime, such as poverty, unemployment, exclusion and lack of opportunity.

This logic of spectacle is gaining ground. On 8 October 2026, the United States Department of Defense announced that the firing-squad execution of Nidal Hasan, scheduled for 3 December at Fort Hood, would be livestreamed.⁸ ACHRS, JCADP and ACADP strongly condemn this decision. Broadcasting an execution turns the taking of a human life into a public spectacle and is a further assault on human dignity.

ACHRS, JCADP and ACADP call for:

1. Commuting existing sentences. The commutation of the sentences of all people currently on death row to terms of imprisonment.
2. Not expanding capital crimes. The abandonment of any plan to extend the death penalty, in particular to drug-related offences, which do not meet the threshold of the "most serious crimes" under international law.
3. Moving towards abolition in the region. The establishment or maintenance of moratoriums by all states of the region, following Lebanon's example, and support for the upcoming UN General Assembly resolution calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

The right to life is not a privilege granted by the state, it belongs to every person, whatever crime they are accused of. We call on Jordan to return to the path it followed for nine years, and on all states of the region to follow Lebanon towards abolition.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Associated Press (2026, 8 October). *Pentagon says the firing squad execution of Fort Hood shooter Nidal Malik Hasan will be livestreamed.* <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/defense-news/2026/10/pentagon-says-the-firing-squad-execution-of-fort-hood-shooter-nidal-malik-hasan-will-be-livestreamed-in-december/>