

THE DEATH PENALTY PROTECTS NO ONE

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10 OCTOBER ,2024-25
**WORLD DAY AGAINST
THE DEATH PENALTY**
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Calling on the Sudanese Authorities to Respect International Human Rights Law on this World Day against the Death Penalty Day

As Sudan grapples with the ongoing war, the issue of the death penalty has taken on heightened urgency. In Sudan, the death penalty is primarily governed by the Sudanese Penal Code of 1991, which outlines several offenses that can result in capital punishment. These include intentional murder, adultery, and serious drug trafficking offenses. The application of the death penalty is often influenced by local interpretations of Islamic law (Sharia) and the prevailing socio-political context, which can lead to its use as a tool for political repression and social control.

In a notable case from March 2024, Fatima Ahmed, a 30-year-old woman, was sentenced to death for adultery under Sudan's harsh legal code, highlighting the continued use of capital punishment for moral offenses amidst the ongoing conflict. This case exemplifies how the legal system is increasingly weaponized against vulnerable populations, reflecting a broader trend of human rights violations in the country.

In May 2023, the Sudanese Sovereign [Council](#) reinstated the controversial Sudanese National Security Laws, which were widely used by the former regime to suppress civic freedoms and target human rights activists. These laws had been suspended following the 2018 revolution that overthrew the previous government. Several local state governors also issued emergency decrees granting arrest and interrogation powers to joint forces composed of military intelligence, police, and national security personnel. In areas under Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) control, such as Port Sudan, these joint forces escalated their activities. This led to the detention and torture of numerous lawyers, activists, volunteers, and journalists, many of whom have faced unfair trials resulting in harsh prison sentences or execution. Meanwhile, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) operate detention centers across Sudan, where thousands of civilians and activists have been held for months.

The transitional government that emerged after the 2019 uprising promised reforms, including a potential moratorium on the death penalty. However, the outbreak of violence has disrupted these efforts and raised concerns about judicial fairness and the rule of law.

Reports from human rights organizations highlight the deteriorating human rights situation. Human Rights Watch published a [report](#) titled “Sudan: War Crimes and Other Abuses” on July 15, 2023, detailing the use of the death penalty in politically motivated cases, where individuals were sentenced to death for opposing the ruling authorities or participating in protests.

Additionally, Amnesty International released its [report](#) “Sudan 2023: Human Rights Violations in the Context of Armed Conflict” in August 2023, noting that at least 50 people were sentenced to death for politically motivated offenses since the outbreak of the conflict. A more recent [report](#) from Amnesty International in April 2024, titled “Sudan: The Death Penalty and Human Rights Violations”, emphasizes the continued application of the death penalty, particularly for moral offenses, and calls for urgent reforms to protect human rights.

Sudan is a signatory to several regional and international human rights treaties, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Article 4, which guarantees the right to life) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Article 6, which protects the right to life and provides that the death penalty may only be imposed for the most

serious crimes). Moreover, as a member of the African Union (AU), Sudan is expected to adhere to the AU's stance against the death penalty, which calls for its abolition or a moratorium.

The international community, including the United Nations, has consistently advised Sudan to respect its obligations under these treaties. In recent statements, the UN has called for the abolition of the death penalty and emphasized the importance of ensuring fair trials and protecting human rights during times of conflict.

The Sudanese Network for Human Rights [reported](#) in their October 2023 publication “Violations in Times of War: The Deteriorating Human Rights Landscape in Sudan” that there has been an alarming increase in extrajudicial killings and summary executions by armed groups, illustrating a grim reality for many Sudanese citizens. The death penalty has become a further tool for repression, entrenching a culture of violence and impunity.

As ACJPS observes the International Day Against the Death Penalty on this 10th day of October 2024, it is crucial to advocate for a moratorium on capital punishment in Sudan, emphasizing the need for legal reforms that prioritize human rights, accountability, and the protection of all individuals, regardless of their political affiliations.

Call to Action

In solidarity with those affected by the death penalty, international pressure is essential. Advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty must be a part of a broader push for peace, justice, and protection of human rights in Sudan by:

1. Engaging in campaigns and social media initiatives to educate the public about the human rights situation in Sudan, focusing on the impact of the death penalty and recent cases like that of Fatima Ahmed.
2. Urging regional and international decision and policy-makers to exert diplomatic pressure on Sudan to cease the use of the death penalty, and reform laws that promote it.
3. Join international campaigns, such as the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, that focus on abolishing capital punishment worldwide and highlight the need for accountability in Sudan.
4. Call for international investigations into human rights abuses, including the use of the death penalty, and support mechanisms for accountability for those responsible for violations.