

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 62nd SESSION
Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on summary executions
with country visit to Lebanon
18 June 2026

The death penalty from the perspective of the prohibition against torture and other forms of ill-treatment and the protection of human dignity - Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions - [A/HRC/62/37](#)

The interactive dialogue opened with the presentation of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, **Morris Tidball-Binz**, who introduced both his new thematic report and the report on his country visit to Lebanon. The Special Rapporteur recalled that his work throughout the mandate had centred on investigations as a means of preventing extrajudicial killings. He highlighted in particular the use of the Minnesota Protocol as a practical tool to strengthen investigations and prevent extrajudicial killings, noting that this work had produced tangible results.

Turning to his thematic report, the Special Rapporteur explained that it examined whether, in light of developments in international law, medical practice and scientific knowledge, the death penalty remains compatible with the universal and absolute prohibition of torture. His conclusion was that, unequivocally, it is not. He recalled that the Human Rights Committee had already suggested this direction in its 2019 General Comment No. 36 on the right to life. In his view, any imposition of the death penalty should now be considered arbitrary, contrary to human rights and an affront to human dignity. The Special Rapporteur explained that the report was based on personal interviews with death row survivors and their close relatives. He stated that, in all interviews without exception, he observed the same symptoms, signs and consequences that he had documented throughout his career as a forensic doctor in survivors of torture. He argued that the death penalty causes chronic and severe mental suffering because of the threat of certain death, generating extreme anxiety, constant fear and deep emotional deterioration with permanent consequences. He also referred to panic, inhuman and degrading detention conditions, and methods of execution, which he said always cause extreme suffering. According to the Special Rapporteur, there is no method of execution that is pain-free or free from failure, and failures only increase the suffering inflicted. He concluded that “the death penalty is in and of itself a refined form of torture”.

He stressed that the suffering and cruelty caused by the death penalty are not incidental, but inherent to the punishment itself. For this reason, he argued that the death penalty should be understood as contrary to international human rights law. He also highlighted an important distinction between victims of torture and persons subjected to the death penalty: death row prisoners and those executed often remain unseen and unheard, as though the seriousness of the crimes they may have committed were enough to justify their suffering. He added that discrimination and racism are also common factors in death penalty cases.

The Special Rapporteur further underlined that relatives of persons sentenced to death or executed also suffer serious physical and mental consequences comparable to those experienced by victims of torture. Their suffering stems from the prolonged anguish of facing the certain death of a loved one. He therefore considered them victims of this punishment as well. The report called for further efforts towards the total abolition of the death penalty, arguing that even if there is not yet a universal and absolute prohibition of capital punishment in international law, it is irreconcilable with the prohibition of torture and with human dignity.

The Special Rapporteur then presented the report on his country visit to **Lebanon**. He said he had been struck by the resilience, fortitude and dignity of the Lebanese people, as well as their yearning for lasting peace based on justice and human rights. He travelled to several locations, including Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, Baalbek, Tyre and Naqoura, in order to assess challenges related to the prevention and documentation of arbitrary executions, including in the context of Israeli attacks.

The Special Rapporteur stated that he was able to document in detail numerous extrajudicial killings resulting from indiscriminate attacks against the Lebanese population, as well as selective killings of protected persons, including medical personnel and journalists. He considered these attacks to be violations of the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and therefore war crimes. In his opinion, they may also commit crimes against humanity.

At the same time, he noted several promising judicial reforms underway in Lebanon, including efforts to strengthen the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law. He referred to initiatives aimed at improving the documentation and prosecution of extrajudicial killings, including war crimes, as well as efforts towards the abolition of the death penalty. He also welcomed the reactivation of human rights mechanisms, such as the National Human Rights Commission and the Commission on Disappeared Persons, and the reopening of investigations into sensitive cases, including the 2020 Beirut port explosion and the killing of a journalist in 2021.

As a forensic doctor, the Special Rapporteur identified a need to improve Lebanon's forensic capacities. He offered the technical assistance of his mandate to support the establishment of a national institute that would operate according to the highest standards, including the Minnesota Protocol approach.

Lebanon (Concerned Country) thanked the Special Rapporteur for his report and for his constructive visit to the country. Lebanon stated that it highly valued the Special Rapporteur's recommendations with a view to strengthening national capacities to protect the right to life.

Lebanon underlined that the visit had taken place in exceptional circumstances, due to continued Israeli aggression despite the ceasefire agreement of November 2024. It stated that since October 2023, Lebanon had suffered grave human and material losses, including deaths, displacement and the destruction of infrastructure. The delegation emphasised the value of the Special Rapporteur's mandate and the need to draw international attention to the right to life, particularly in situations of armed conflict. It condemned these violations and renewed its call for respect for international human rights law and accountability for perpetrators.

Lebanon focused on three recommendations, in particular. First, it considered the reactivation of the Institute for Forensic Medicine important for strengthening national capacity to investigate unlawful deaths, preserve evidence, and document grave human rights violations. It stated that consultations with national stakeholders would continue in order to develop a national plan setting priorities and identifying the necessary resources. Lebanon emphasised that it had national expertise and professional capacities that could be built upon, but required resources to develop them within a sustainable national framework. Second, Lebanon referred to judicial reform and stated that the House of Representatives had passed a new law in December 2025 to regulate the justice system and strengthen judicial independence. Third, it recalled that Lebanon has maintained a *de facto* moratorium on the death penalty since 2002, with no executions carried out for more than two decades. The delegation also referred to a draft law aimed at commuting death sentences into life imprisonment, describing this as a reflection of Lebanon's commitment to legal reform and human rights.

Lebanon also drew attention to Israeli attacks against journalists and paramedics, stating that these attacks had continued since the Special Rapporteur's visit, including during the ceasefire period, and

had escalated since March 2026. It referred to the killing of 11 journalists and the targeting of medical personnel. The delegation also mentioned a draft law aimed at combating impunity and strengthening the national framework for accountability. Lebanon concluded by reaffirming its commitment to cooperation with the Special Rapporteur and other UN human rights mechanisms.

Interactive Dialogue

Among the 41 Delegations that took the floor, **Finland, on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries**, underlined the irreversible risk of wrongful convictions and the disproportionate impact of the death penalty on persons in vulnerable situations, including ethnic minorities, persons from lower socio-economic backgrounds and persons with disabilities. It considered the death penalty incompatible with human dignity, the right to life and the absolute prohibition of torture and encouraged all States to maintain moratoriums on executions. **The European Union** supported the report's argument that the death penalty cannot be reconciled with the absolute prohibition of torture or with human dignity, regardless of the safeguards applied. It agreed that capital punishment is often discriminatory and has a disproportionate impact on persons in vulnerable situations. **Liechtenstein, on behalf of Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland and Liechtenstein**, stressed that the death penalty is not an isolated judicial act, but a process that can cause severe physical and mental suffering at every stage, from arrest and interrogation to execution and its aftermath. It also emphasised the suffering caused to family members, particularly when they are denied information, final visits or the ability to mourn with dignity. **Togo** highlighted the physical and psychological suffering inherent to capital punishment, as well as its consequences for family members.

Ukraine, on behalf of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine, drew attention to extrajudicial executions and unlawful killings of civilians and prisoners of war in areas of Ukraine affected by Russia's full-scale invasion. It stated that these acts constitute grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and require a strong international response.

Norway, on behalf of the Coalition for Atrocity Prevention and Justice for Sudan and other States, and **Sudan** expressed grave concern about the risk of atrocities and deliberate killings in Sudan. The delegation urged all parties to comply fully with international humanitarian law, allowing civilians to leave safely and ensure unhindered humanitarian access.

Singapore, Algeria and China rejected key findings of the Special Rapporteur's report, arguing that the lawful application of the death penalty does not amount to extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution when carried out in accordance with due process and judicial safeguards. Both delegations emphasized that international human rights law does not prohibit capital punishment and stressed States' sovereign right to determine its use within their legal systems. Singapore defended its procedural guarantees for foreign nationals, including interpretation services, consular access and legal aid, while China highlighted reforms aimed at restricting and carefully regulating the death penalty, including the Supreme People's Court's mandatory review of all death sentences and the reduction of capital offences in its criminal legislation. Additionally, **Indonesia** expressed reservations about the report's legal assessment that the death penalty per se constitutes torture and violates jus cogens norms. Capital punishment is not equivalent to extrajudicial or summary execution. **Russia** argued that where the death penalty is provided for in national legislation, its use may be proportionate. The delegation criticised what it described as a bias in favour of criminals who have committed heinous crimes, arguing that victims and their relatives are being placed in the background. Russia called for a more objective approach.

Algeria also expressed grave concern over recent discriminatory death penalty legislation enacted by the occupying power in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The delegation argued that these measures establish a dual legal system in which capital punishment is applied in a discriminatory manner against Palestinians, in violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It stated that such practices contravene Articles 64 and 68 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, undermine fair trial guarantees, risk arbitrary deprivation of life and may amount to serious breaches of international law.

Mauritania rejected or questioned some of the information concerning Mauritania, stating that certain allegations had not been verified or confirmed by national authorities.

Iraq stated that its domestic legislation limits the death penalty to the most serious crimes. The delegation emphasised that trials provide the right to legal defence and that death sentences are subject to review by higher judicial bodies. Iraq also referred to discussions held with relevant individuals concerning the references to Iraq in the report.

Malaysia reaffirmed the importance of human dignity, the rule of law, due process and international human rights standards in criminal justice. It stated that their reforms restore judicial discretion and reflect a commitment to proportionality, fairness and individualised sentencing.

Palestine said the report was particularly relevant in light of Israel's recent adoption of legislation introducing the death penalty against Palestinians. Palestine argued that this law does not emerge in a vacuum, but within a broader system marked by unlawful killings, torture, arbitrary detention, systematic discrimination and impunity. It stated that the law would operate within a dual legal regime in which Palestinians are subject to military courts, while Israelis, including settlers in the same occupied territory, are subject to a civilian legal system. The delegation warned that the law removes safeguards, eliminates clemency and mandates execution within a short timeframe, increasing the risk of arbitrariness and irreversible injustice. Palestine argued that the introduction of the death penalty in this context is especially grave because of its discriminatory nature and because it runs counter to the global movement towards abolition.

Afghanistan expressed concerns about the systematic pattern of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions targeting former government officials, civil servants, members of the security forces and artists, particularly those who had returned from Iran and Pakistan. According to the delegation, these individuals are systematically identified by the Taliban and, shortly afterwards, their bodies are found bearing clear signs of execution. Afghanistan stressed that these are not isolated cases, but part of a broader pattern of systematic targeting carried out with total impunity.

Kuwait expressed concern about the repercussions of Israeli attacks, including the targeting of healthcare workers and journalists, which it said contributed to destabilising the country. The protection of the right to life and human dignity are fundamental principles, which should be strengthened through the rule of law and due process guarantees.

Regarding the death penalty, **Iran** argued that all measures related to the implementation of executions should be carried out in accordance with national laws and regulations, and with respect for the legal frameworks of Member States. Iran also stressed that the death penalty is not the only form of deprivation of the right to life.

Egypt commended the report for referring to the death penalty law adopted by Israel, which it said applies only to Palestinians. Egypt described the law as completely discriminatory, arguing that it

strengthens an apartheid system and runs counter to the principles of justice and equality before the law. The delegation stated that the law constitutes a grave violation of international human rights law and called on the international community to assume its moral and legal responsibilities in the face of such injustice.

At the same time, Egypt disagreed with the Special Rapporteur's position linking the death penalty to torture or extrajudicial killings. The delegation argued that torture is fully prohibited under national law, whereas the death penalty may be applied in accordance with the law when fair trial safeguards are met and all legal remedies and avenues of appeal have been exhausted.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (41 country delegations):

Venezuela, Armenia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Brazil, Belarus, Council of Europe, South Africa, Ireland, Cuba, Egypt, Iran, France, Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Algeria, India, Kenya, Spain, Kuwait, Czech Republic, Malawi, Afghanistan, Togo, Russia, State of Palestine, Indonesia, Malaysia, Iraq, Ukraine, China, Mauritania, Sudan, Singapore, Costa Rica, Vietnam, The Republic of Moldova, Liechtenstein, Norway, EU, Finland.

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (11):

State of Palestine independent commission on human rights, Ensemble contre la peine de mort, Gulf center for human rights, Institute for reporters freedom and safety, Jubilee campaign, Conectas direitos humanos, Imam alis popular students relief society, Advocates for human rights, International service for human rights, IDPC consortium, International federation of action by Christians for the abolition of torture.

To watch the full meeting refer to [UN Web TV](#).

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