



Parliamentarians for Global Action
Parlamentarios para la Acción Global
Action Mondiale des Parlementaires
برلمانيون من أجل التحرك العالمي

Parliamentary Platform and Campaign for the Abolition of the Death Penalty

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) is a network of more than 1300 parliamentarians from 143 Parliaments across the world, who in their personal capacity and in the framework of their mandate, support international justice, the Rule of law, democracy and human rights. In 2013, PGA launched the first-ever *Global Parliamentary Platform for the Abolition of the Death Penalty*.

The movement towards the abolition of the death penalty is at a critical moment. While a relative majority of States took abolitionist positions (*deJure or de facto*) and the number of executions has decreased, 58 States still consider the death penalty, with at least 607 persons having been executed annually in those countries. The majority of these countries are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Middle East, with a tendency to resume use of the death penalty for in countries that had a *de facto* moratorium (ex. Pakistan, Jordan) or to expand the scope of crimes subject to the death penalty (ex. Uganda, Nigeria). Through drafting legislation and deliberating on national policies, Parliamentarians have a crucial role to play in the movement to restrict the use of the death penalty, and ultimately abolish it. In addition, the involvement of parliamentarians in public debates can encourage a change in the public opinion in understanding the ineffectiveness of the death penalty and alternatives to its use.

METHODOLOGY

PGA utilizes a peer-to-peer advocacy methodology (parliamentarian to parliamentarian), to allow for a multi-partisan involvement of the concerned stakeholders to strengthen their understanding of misconceptions about the death penalty and its ineffectiveness in crime prevention and justice. PGA also provides technical assistance and coordinates actions to strengthen the political will for parliamentary initiatives and legislative reforms to overcome the obstacles stalling the process of abolition. The tailored initiatives and activities are structured in such a way as to ensure the "cross-fertilization" between international and national activities.

PGA's platform works for the ratification of international legal norms prohibiting the death penalty, including the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on the moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

A. PGA CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY

Since the establishment of the platform, the Members of PGA directly contributed to actions in favour of the abolition of the death penalty through the world.

- On 19 February 2016 the Chair of PGA's UK National Group, Mr. Mark Pritchard MP calls on Foreign and Commonwealth Office to press for Belarusian government on the abolition of the death penalty.
- PGA members contributed significantly to the Abolition of the Death Penalty in Suriname and Cote

d'Ivoire as both abolished the death penalty in their Criminal Codes - In Suriname, this step was proposed by PGA Members, who facilitated a bipartisan, unanimous vote on the reformed Penal Code on 4 March 2015.

- PGA raised awareness of MPs in Togo and Cote d'Ivoire on the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which was ratified in July 2015 by Togo.
- Through peer-to-peer exchange, MPs in Tunisia were sensitized on the issue of the abolition of the death penalty, in particular in the context of the fight against terrorism.
- Following the organization of the first activity of the targeted campaigns for the abolition of the death penalty in Dares Salaam, 9 Tanzanian MPs committed to introduce a private members' bill abolishing the death penalty and requested PGA's Secretariat's technical assistance, while 3 Ugandan MPs committed to promote abolition through a bill introduced by member MPs to abolish it. In December 2015, passed the first reading in Plenary and has now been sent to Committee. The Clerk of the Committee has requested that PGA give an expert presentation on Death Penalty Abolition to the Committee in 2016.
- From 10 to 13 June, PGA conducted a field mission to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on the abolition of the death penalty and the fight against impunity, in particular a meeting with its members, which included the Min. of Law Nancy Shukri, resulting in strategies and actions to move forward the abolition of the mandatory death penalty for drug related crimes. Along with these stakeholders, PGA is organizing a Parliamentary Seminar on the abolition of the death penalty (with the Bar Council) in the Parliament of Malaysia in November.
- On 17 November 2015, PGA hosted a Parliamentary Roundtable and Consultations on the Abolition of the Mandatory Death Penalty in Malaysia. The main outcome was the commitment of Min Shukri to abolish the mandatory death penalty and to have the legislation amended accordingly next year.
- For more information, please go to <http://www.pgaction.org/campaigns/abolitionof-the-death-penalty.html>

(Non-exhaustive list)

B. TARGET COUNTRIES

Regarding the *Parliamentary Platform for the Abolition of the Death Penalty*, all PGA Members could join and so that PGA could conduct advocacy as well as technical assistance actions (capacity building) in countries in which it has Members (over 140).

Regarding *Targeted Campaigns for the Abolition of the Death Penalty*, the concerned countries are:

Africa: Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire (Optional Protocol of the ICCPR) Guinea, Ghana, Mali, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Chad, Togo (Optional Protocol of the ICCPR)

Middle East and North Africa: Bahrain, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Yemen.

Asia: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan.

Americas: United States, Jamaica, and Trinidad-and-Tobago.

C. EVENTS AND ACTIONS OF 2015 - 2016

04 March 2016: PGA organised, with the Parliament of Ghana a Round-Table on the Abolition of the Death Penalty under the leadership of PGA members **Hon. Irene Naa Torshie Addo, MP** and **Hon. Ursula Owufu-Ekufu, MP, PGA Board Member**. During the discussions, experts from Civil society, Government

officials, the Judiciary and the legal professions joined Parliamentarians from Ghana, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe as well as a representative of PGA's global network to generate a dialogue on the abolition of the death penalty and to share their experiences and the challenges on this important issue.

24-25 February 2016: PGA organised several consultations on the Death Penalty in Indonesia, Jakarta. The PGA delegation was led by **Hon. Aziz Syamsuddin** and aimed to foster a discourse on the abolition of death penalty and support future actions in this regard. As a result of the discussions stakeholders from civil society, national institutions and the diplomatic community agreed on the importance of the respect of human rights and the Rule of Law to engage in a debate on the abolition of the death penalty. In addition, some parliamentarians expressed their will to see Indonesia moving away from the death penalty and identified the criminal code reform as a good starting point to reduce its use.

16-17 November 2015: PGA organised a Parliamentary Roundtable and Consultations on the abolition of the mandatory death penalty in Malaysia during which all participating MPs supported moving forward with the abolition of the death penalty. PGA Member **Hon. Nancy Shukri**, MP and Minister of Law committed during the Roundtable to introduce legislation abolishing the mandatory death penalty for drug-related offences in 2016.

7 October 2015: PGA organised a Parliamentary Roundtable and Consultations on the abolition of the death penalty in Uganda during which the Parliamentarians all expressed their support for abolition. Since then and thanks to the leadership of **Hon. Rebecca Kadaga**, Speaker of Parliament and PGA Member, a law abolishing the death penalty was adopted in Plenary Session and sent to the relevant Committee for examination.

June 2015: Parliamentary Mission in Malaysia in the margins of the Regional Conference on the abolition of the death penalty organized by Together Against the Death Penalty, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

3 - 4 May 2015: On 3 May, PGA organized a Roundtable meeting on the abolition of the death penalty in Tanzania and Uganda in Dar es Salaam with the participation of Parliamentarians from Tanzania and Uganda, as well as experts, government officials, NGOs and relevant stakeholders, to enable a peer-to-peer discussion on the issue. In addition, on Monday 4 May, the PGA delegation held a series of bilateral institutional and informal meetings with relevant stakeholders from Government, the Judiciary, Parliament, civil society and the Diplomatic community.

D. EVENTS IN WHICH PGA PARTICIPATED

10 April 2015: Participation and intervention of a PGA delegation (Hon. Lamine Thiam and the Campaign Manager of the Parliamentary Platform for the abolition of the death penalty) in the parliamentary workshop on the abolition of the death penalty in Tunisia organized by Ensemble contre la peine de mort, Tunis, Tunisia.

9 April 2015: Launching of the book "13 ways of looking at the death penalty" of PGA Member M. Mario Marazziti, Chair of the Human Rights Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, Italian Cultural Center, NY

3 December 2014: In collaboration with Together Against the Death Penalty, PGA organized a reception in the margins of the 36th Annual Forum in Rabat (Morocco) on 4 and 5 December 2014 to present the parliamentary guide on the abolition of the death penalty. During the same day, Members of PGA from Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, and Yemen participated in the Workshop on the death penalty in the MENA region organized by TADP and the Coalition.

20-22 June 2014: A PGA Delegation (Ruth Wijdenbosh, Suriname and PGA Secretary-General) participated in the Annual Assembly of Global Coalition for the abolition of the death penalty, Puerto Rico, San Juan.

March 2014: The Secretary-General of PGA participated to a meeting of experts on the redaction of a

parliamentary guide on the abolition of the death penalty.

13-14 January 2014: PGA Member **Mark Pritchard** (United Kingdom) participated in a regional conference on the abolition of the death penalty in Freetown, Sierra Leone, organized by Hands off Cain and Manifesto 99. Two former PGA Members, H.E. Mr Ernest B. Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and H.E. Ms Emma Bonino, then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, with governmental delegations, parliamentarians, and members of civil society of 13 African countries took part in this event.

10 October 2013: On the occasion of the International Day against the Death Penalty, Ms **Ruth Wijdenbosch**, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Suriname and PGA Member, intervened on the abolition before the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva.

18 September 2013: Ten Parliamentarians of the PGA National Group in Sierra Leone organized a meeting with the former President of the National Group in Italy, Marco Perduca, in order to define a strategy to support the 2014 Regional Conference co-organized by Hands off Cain.