

THE DEATH PENALTY FOR DRUG OFFENCES:

GLOBAL OVERVIEW 2024



MINIMUM CONFIRMED EXECUTIONS FOR DRUG OFFENCES (2015-2024)

- By the end of 2024, **34 countries retained the death penalty for a range of drug offences** worldwide.
- **Drug-related executions were confirmed in four countries** (China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Singapore). Executions are assumed to have been carried out in North Korea and Vietnam, on which information is lacking due to state secrecy and censorship.
- **At least 615 people were executed for drug offences** worldwide (excluding figures from China, Vietnam and North Korea). This represents a 32% increase from 2023 and a staggering 1950% increase from 2020 – the year with the lowest figure on record.
- **Drug offences were responsible for roughly 40% of all executions confirmed globally** – almost one in two.
- **Iran executed 485 people for drug offences**, equating to 79% of known drug-related executions globally. Of these, at least 14 were women – the highest number of women executed in Iran in a decade.
- A 6000% surge from 2023 in known drug-related executions took place in Saudi Arabia, where **122 people were executed for drug offences** – the highest figure ever recorded in the Kingdom.
- **377 death sentences for drug offences** were confirmed in 17 countries.
- **At least 2,300 people are on death row for drug offences** in 19 countries.
- Confirmed figures are a massive underestimate of the phenomenon due to a **persistent lack of transparency, and censorship on information about the use of the death penalty.**

