

Amnesty International Swedish section: Motion on strengthening Amnesty International's work against the death penalty

The Global Assembly

Instructs the International Board to:

-Review Amnesty International's work against the death penalty to assess whether it effectively adjusts to "shrinking space" for civil society and human rights defenders, and other human rights priorities, including discrimination, counter-terrorism and drugs policies.

-Ensure that the review informs Amnesty's the implementation of the next strategic goals with a view to strengthen the organisation's role as one of the main human rights organizations working on the death penalty globally at a time when HRD partners face increasing difficulties addressing the death penalty at national levels and several national leaders fuelling the current human rights backlash appear set on turning the tide away from moratoria/abolition.

Rationale for this motion

Over the past four decades, Amnesty has been instrumental in enormous improvements and clear results in global campaigning against the death penalty.

Anti-death penalty work remains one of few human rights fields where the current backlash has not yet stalled a positive momentum. Yet challenges are mounting: Amnesty's local HRD partners face increasing challenges when addressing the death penalty, whether fair trial concerns, drugs relating policing, or legislation. This effect of "shrinking space" seriously undercuts the work against the death penalty in several retentionist countries. Meanwhile, a number of countries are considering reintroducing the death penalty.

At a time when our victories appear to be dwindling against the backdrop of increasing hostility towards human rights and the rule of law, maintaining work on a "classic" Amnesty issue where we still see a positive momentum appears tactical.

There is also ample opportunity to develop our death penalty activism to clearly link to related issues of wide concern, including discrimination, counter terrorism, and the so called war against drugs.

The Swedish section took a lead when Amnesty International included work against the death penalty in its mandate in the 1970's. The members of the section feel strongly about this issue and are concerned that the work will be downgraded or phased out as Amnesty takes on new challenges. At the Annual General Meeting of the Swedish section in May 2019, a motion was passed, instructing the Swedish Board to intensify and develop Amnesty's work on the death penalty both in Sweden and internationally.