

A New Introduction to the Death Penalty

The death penalty has been a topic full of controversy, and one that was brought up by the United Nations Human Rights Committee earlier today. While the USA, UK, Australia and France are all against the death penalty, Iran, Iraq, India, and Bangladesh are not. Discussions got heated.

The representative from Iran made the argument that jails are a misuse of the government's money, when it could be used on improving conditions for an entire country rather than just within the jail system. They “encourage capital punishment, as a life sentence can just as easily be seen as torture”.

France, the US and Australia stated that they are willing to provide funding in order to improve human rights within the prison system, but only for those countries who would not support death penalties. Each of these countries stated that the death penalty was a human rights violation and should not longer be considered acceptable. The USA even argued that the death penalty is more expensive to uphold compared to prisons, even with maintenance and social distancing issues. In their eyes, the death penalty is “not fair to prisoners who may have a chance to reform”.

The discussion became heated when Bangladesh countered the US's earlier points, saying it was “ironic that USA does not believe in death penalty as in 2019, 2600 people were on death row”. The US quickly retaliated, explaining that currently their jail system is state based, and as they are in a transition period, they are looking to move to a federally based system, meaning that regulations for prisons would be the same nationwide.

Iran began to defend themselves by explaining that the death penalty is not used for every crime, only heinous and violent acts. They explained that countries with high child poverty rates could benefit from the death penalty in order to create a more balanced society.

Later on, France agreed with the US, the UK, and Germany saying that capital punishment is completely unnecessary and a violation of all human rights. France abolished the death penalty in 1981, and they would like to continue to act against the death penalty. Germany agreed that once their death penalty was abolished in 1949, the dignity of prisoners had been guaranteed. The UK stated that the death penalty should not be seen as something to help to government conserve money or deal with overcrowding, and repeated that the death penalty is a violation of human rights.

The Dominican Republic mentioned that the implementation of the death penalty does not uphold the rights of prisoners, but rather steers the prisons towards violence, instead of rehabilitation.

El Salvador had a different point of view, and mentioned that the death penalty might be a solution to deter crime, as it does not re-victimize the affected families. India and Iran agreed. As all of these countries have the death penalty, they wanted to reinstate that it is not used for petty crimes, but for murderers and those who have committed despicable crimes.