



Item 3 General Debate Oral Statement

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

The co-signatories of this statement welcome the reports calling on States to refrain from imposing the death penalty for drug offences—a stance firmly grounded in international human rights law and standards, which limit this punishment to the ‘most serious crimes’. Drug offences fall outside this threshold.

Yet, in 2024 alone, at least 615 individuals, likely many more, were executed for drug offences worldwide—marking a dramatic 32% increase over the previous year—and accounting for nearly 40% of all confirmed global executions.

Iran remains at the epicentre of this crisis, being responsible for 79% of all known drug-related executions in 2024. Most alarmingly, Saudi Arabia recorded a staggering 122 executions—marking a 6,000% increase, signalling a renewed and unforgiving commitment to capital punishment as a tool of drug control. Concerningly, both figures are set to be higher by the end of 2025.

This regression is not inevitable. After positive developments in Pakistan and Malaysia in 2023, in June 2025 Vietnam removed the death penalty for certain drug crimes—changes that benefitted, or can benefit, hundreds on death row.

But meaningful progress requires international leadership and drug policy reform. We call on member states to continue to publicly condemn this cruel practice, develop coherent alternatives rooted in public health and human rights, and ensure that no funding for drug control efforts risk contributing to executions.

Thank you.

Co-signatories:

1. Harm Reduction International
2. ACAT-Liberia
3. International Bar Association’s Human Rights Institute
4. Dejusticia (Colombia)
5. HAYAT
6. ELEMENTA (Colombia and Mexico)
7. International Drug Policy Consortium
8. Dianova International
9. Parliamentarians for Global Action

10. Amnesty International
11. International Network of People Who Use Drugs
12. EHRA