



**Bhutan**  
**Joint Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review:**  
**The Death Penalty**

**Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights**  
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1996  
and  
**The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty**

for the 47th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review  
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**The Advocates for Human Rights** (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based nongovernmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. Established in 1983, The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publications. In 1991, The Advocates adopted a formal commitment to oppose the death penalty worldwide and organized a death penalty project to provide pro bono assistance on post-conviction appeals, as well as education and advocacy to end capital punishment. The Advocates currently holds a seat on the Steering Committee of the World Coalition against the Death Penalty.

**The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty**, an alliance of more than 150 NGOs, bar associations, local authorities, and unions, was created in Rome on 13 May 2002. The aim of the World Coalition is to strengthen the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Its ultimate objective is to obtain the universal abolition of the death penalty. To achieve its goal, the World Coalition advocates for a definitive end to death sentences and executions in those countries where the death penalty is in force. In some countries, it is seeking to obtain a reduction in the use of capital punishment as a first step towards abolition.

1. Bhutan abolished the death penalty for all crimes on 20 March 2004.<sup>1</sup> The 2008 Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan also prohibits any person from being subjected to capital punishment.<sup>2</sup>
2. Bhutan has neither signed nor ratified or acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights or to the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR.

**A1 Scope of international obligations; A12 Acceptance of international norms; D23 Death penalty**

**Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not implemented**

3. In the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, Bhutan noted two recommendations to take steps toward the ratification of or accession to OP2.<sup>3</sup> During the interactive dialogue, the Royal Government of Bhutan stated that due to limitations stemming from insufficient financial resources and technical capacity to fulfill the obligations outlined in various treaties and conventions, “accession to the remaining human rights treaties will be considered upon thorough study and consultation among national stakeholders, based on national needs, priorities and capabilities.”<sup>4</sup> The Royal Government also stated that it is committed to, “gradually accede to the remaining human rights instruments depending on resource availability and capacity building,” but did not make any commitments regarding OP2.<sup>5</sup>
4. Since 2019, there has been no evidence that authorities have taken any steps toward ratification of or accession to OP2.
5. **Suggested recommendations:**
  - **Take all necessary steps to ratify or accede to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, without reservations.**
  - **Take all necessary steps to ratify or accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, without reservations.**
  - **Request technical assistance from the Friends of the Second Optional Protocol to carry out the necessary steps of ratification of or accession to OP2.**

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<sup>1</sup> Death Penalty Information Center, “Countries That Have abolished the death penalty since 1976,” accessed Apr. 1, 2024, <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/policy-issues/international/countries-that-have-abolished-the-death-penalty-since-1976>

<sup>2</sup> CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN July 18, 2008, art. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bhutan, (3 July 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/42/8, ¶ 158.12-.13.

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bhutan, (3 July 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/42/8/Add.1, ¶ 158.12-.13.

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bhutan, (3 July 2019), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/42/8/Add.1, ¶ 158.12-.13.