



Palau
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 52nd Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
7 May 2026

Submitted 10 October 2025

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 (WCADP), 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. Palau abolished the death penalty upon gaining independence from the United States in 1994 and is abolitionist for all crimes.¹
2. Palau has signed but not ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and it has taken no steps toward ratifying the Covenant's Second Optional Protocol, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.²

Scope of international obligations; Acceptance of international norms; Death penalty

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not implemented

3. In its third-cycle Universal Periodic Review in 2021, Palau promptly supported all five recommendations it received to ratify or accede to OP2.³
4. Since that time, however, Palau has neither signed nor ratified OP2. Nonetheless, with the exception of an absence in 2020, Palau has voted in favor of every UN General Assembly resolution calling for a global moratorium on the death penalty since 2007.⁴
5. **Suggested recommendations:**
 - **Take all necessary steps to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Second Optional Protocol, without reservations.**
 - **Request technical assistance with the ratification process from the Friends of the Second Optional Protocol.**

¹ Amnesty International, *Death Sentences and Executions 2024* (April 8, 2025), at 42, available online at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/8976/2025/en/>; Kevin Bennardo, *The Rights and Liberties of the Palau Constitution*, Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal, Vol. 12:2, at 38 (“No Palauan case has addressed the process due before the Republic may deprive someone of their life. No criminal statute provides for the death penalty and the issue has not otherwise arisen.”).

² Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *UN Treaty Body Database, Ratification Status for Palau*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=12&Lang=EN (last visited 28 Sept. 2025).

³ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Palau*, (16 July 2021), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/48/12, ¶ 88.17 (“Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Second Optional Protocol, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (France) (Australia) (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)”; ¶ 88.34 (“Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and abolish the use of the death penalty in all circumstances (Finland)”; ¶ 88.36 (“Sign and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Spain)”).

⁴ International Commission Against the Death Penalty, UNGA Moratorium Resolution Table, <https://icomdp.org/map-unga/> (last visited 28 Sept. 2025).