

# THE DEATH PENALTY PROJECT



# 2024

[www.deathpenaltyproject.org](http://www.deathpenaltyproject.org)



# Who we are

The Death Penalty Project is a legal action NGO, housed and supported by Simons Muirhead Burton LLP.

**Our vision** is a world without the death penalty, with strong and fair criminal justice systems that uphold human rights and offer access to justice for all.

**Our mission** is to advocate for people facing the death penalty or other cruel punishments, and to support the movement towards abolition through reform.

We provide access to justice for individuals and uncover miscarriages of justice, develop and promote human rights standards in criminal justice systems, encourage and facilitate evidence-based discussion on capital punishment and engage with policymakers around the world to advocate for penal reform.

## What we do



We **REPRESENT** and assist those facing the death penalty and other cruel punishments, free of charge.



We **COMMISSION** and publish original research to challenge misconceptions and deepen understanding of issues around the death penalty.



We **DELIVER** targeted and practical capacity building to judges, lawyers, mental health professionals, and others working within the criminal justice system.



We **ENGAGE** with governments, policymakers, and other key stakeholders in a constructive dialogue on how abolition of the death penalty can be achieved.

# A message from our Co-Executive Directors



As we write this message, we reflect on the achievements of the past year and look ahead to a significant anniversary in the next: 2025 will mark 20 years since we established The Death Penalty Project (DPP). We took the decision to create DPP as an independent, non-profit organisation to take forward the work that had first begun within Simons Muirhead Burton LLP in the 1970s and that, together, we have been leading since the 1990s.

When DPP was formed in 2005, only 99 states had abolished the death penalty. Now, 128 states have done so. With nearly two-thirds of all countries rejecting capital punishment, we have seen a momentous sea change in the status of the death penalty worldwide. However, progress is rarely linear. This was demonstrated starkly when Taiwan carried out an execution in January 2025, its first in five years and only months after its Constitutional Court considered a challenge to the death penalty.

While our work cannot stop until we achieve global abolition of the death

penalty, it is important to mark the progress along the way. This includes the significant achievement of abolition of the death penalty in Zimbabwe on New Year's Eve 2024. Zimbabwe has now become the 30th country within Africa to abolish the death penalty. We have worked towards this goal for nearly a decade, alongside and in support of our local partner [Veritas](#) and dedicated parliamentarians and diplomats. Supporting the progress of the Death Penalty Abolition Bill as it passed through parliament has been a significant focus of our work in 2024.

This follows our shared efforts with local partners that led to abolition in Ghana and Sierra Leone, in 2023 and 2021 respectively. These enduring partnerships have been central to all that we've been able to achieve thus far.

Our work would also not be possible without the stalwart support of our funders or the thousands of hours of time and expertise we generously receive pro bono from many lawyers, doctors, forensic experts and academics. We also extend our thanks to our dedicated and hardworking staff.

As we look ahead to 2025, we redouble our commitment to a world without the death penalty and look forward to your support as we make progress towards this vision.

**Saul Lehrfreund and Parvais Jabbar**

# Our work in 2024

## Free legal representation

This year, we assisted more than 75 people in 21 countries.

We continue to provide free legal representation to individuals appealing to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (the Privy Council). In 2024, this included 36 people currently on death row, at risk of a capital sentence or previously sentenced to death. It also included non-capital cases, where we have sought to uncover miscarriages of justice or identify wrongful convictions. Read about the stories of Nardis Maynard and Julian Washington on pages 8 and 9.

We continue to assist British nationals facing a death sentence abroad. In 2024,

this involved 12 people in seven countries across **Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia** and **Southeast Asia**. Read about the consular assistance we provide on pages 12 and 13.

We supported three challenges to the death penalty in **Kenya, Guyana** and **Taiwan**. In September 2024, the Constitutional Court of Taiwan delivered its judgment on a landmark challenge to the constitutionality of the death penalty, brought by the [Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty \(TAEDP\)](#) with support from DPP and other actors. While the court did not abolish the death penalty in its entirety, it did restrict its application. Read about this judgment and our other challenges to the death penalty on pages 10 and 11.

## Capacity building

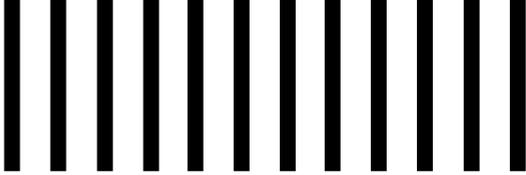
We continue to design and deliver practical training to those working within the criminal justice system on human rights law and issues relating to the death penalty.

This year, in collaboration with our partner [Project 39A](#), National Law University Delhi, we conducted forensic psychiatry workshops focused on sentencing and mental health law in capital cases in **India**. The workshops, held at mental health institutes in Bangalore and Pune, explored the intersection of mental health, criminal law and medical ethics. With Project 39A, our ambition is to encourage more active participation of mental health professionals at critical stages of capital cases.

In **The Bahamas**, at the invitation of the Chief Justice, we provided assistance in

the drafting of new case management rules to improve issues related to delays in the criminal justice system. This was followed by training programmes for all judicial officers, as well as prosecutors and lawyers, to improve case management of trials and appeals.

In **Sierra Leone**, we were invited by the Chief Justice to develop new sentencing guidelines following the abolition of the death penalty in 2021. Over the past two years, we have coordinated the drafting of new sentencing guidelines. This year, we held further consultations in Freetown with key members of the judiciary, lawyers, government agencies and civil society, working closely with the UK Sierra Leone Pro Bono Network and [AdvocAid Sierra Leone](#). Read more about the assistance we provide post-abolition on page 7.



## Research and publications

We commission and publish original research and resources to address knowledge gaps and deepen understanding on the death penalty.

This year, we continued our research into the deterrent effect of the death penalty in drug-related offences in Southeast Asia, with our partner the [Death Penalty Research Unit \(DPRU\)](#) at the University of Oxford. The study involves drug offenders on death row and within communities, examining their risk assessment and decision-making processes to assess whether capital punishment serves as a deterrent.

We are also working with the DPRU on a project to examine states that have not executed for at least 10 years, which the United Nations classifies as ‘abolitionist de facto’ (ADF). This research examines current definitions and perceptions of ADF status, barriers to abolition in ADF states and the challenges faced by policymakers.

## Policy and engagement

Drawing on decades of experience, and informed by empirical research, we provide expert assistance to governments and advice to the diplomatic community. Working closely with civil society partners and legal professionals, we also coordinate informed dialogue on reform of the death penalty.

In 2024, this policy and engagement work has included:

- Supporting the progression of the Death Penalty Abolition Bill through parliament and the Senate, leading to the abolition of the death penalty in Zimbabwe. Read about the journey to abolition on pages 6 and 7.
- Engaging with parliamentarians, the media, the church and other key stakeholders on abolition of the death penalty in Belize. Belize has not executed anybody for nearly 40 years and has not handed down a death sentence in nearly 20 years, but the death penalty remains a lawful sentence. Read about our work in Belize on pages 14 and 15.
- Advising the international community and civil society, and assisting local lawyers in Taiwan following the Constitutional Court’s judgment on the challenge to the constitutionality of the death penalty, in close coordination with our partners TAEDP and the [World Coalition Against the Death Penalty](#).
- Scoping pathways to abolition in Nigeria, informed by conversations with parliamentarians, lawyers, human rights institutions, civil society organisations and the diplomatic community. Nigeria retains the mandatory death penalty for murder and armed robbery. Nigeria’s death row is one of the largest in the world, with more than 3,500 people currently under sentence of death.
- Sustaining conversations with policymakers in Ghana following abolition of the death penalty, on priorities such as commutation of sentences for the 176 people remaining on death row.
- Discussing the status of the death penalty and potential for reform in Japan with civil society, the diplomatic community, parliamentarians, lawyers and journalists.

# Zimbabwe abolishes the death penalty

Almost two decades after its last execution, Zimbabwe has become the 30<sup>th</sup> country in Africa to abolish the death penalty. **Approximately 62 people on death row will have their death sentences commuted to a term of imprisonment.**

The Death Penalty Abolition Act removes the death penalty for ordinary offences. This has been the culmination of months of targeted support on the Death Penalty Abolition Bill as it passed through the legislative process, building on almost a decade of our work alongside the abolitionist movement in Zimbabwe. The Bill was introduced by opposition MP Edwin Mushoriwa in November 2023. It was approved by Cabinet in February 2024, giving it cross-party consensus, as well as signalling the intent of the Government to consign the death penalty to history. Since then, it was passed by the Senate then assented to by President Emmerson Mnangagwa and enacted into law on 31 December 2024.

This progress follows our concerted efforts in Zimbabwe, following our concerted efforts to successfully advance abolition of the death penalty in Sierra Leone in 2021 and in Ghana in 2023, showcases the power of strong partnerships with local civil society, politicians and diplomats, who help put the death penalty on the political agenda.

Over the past nine years, we have collaborated with Zimbabwean NGO **Veritas** and the Death Penalty Research Unit to create a platform for policy change in Zimbabwe. Together we produced rigorous **empirical research** that countered widely held assumptions about public support and the deterrent effect of the



death penalty. We enabled productive, evidence-led dialogue on the issue and supported diplomatic engagement led by the British and Swiss Embassies in Zimbabwe. Our collective efforts, together with a wide range of partners and allies, laid the groundwork for the Bill, and helped to shape the ways in which Zimbabwe could move away from the death penalty.

The historic decision to reject capital punishment in Zimbabwe is testament to the skill and persistence of the many individuals and organisations involved in making progress towards this historic reform. We will continue to support Veritas and local lawyers to ensure that all those previously on death row are resentenced.

## Veritas

Veritas works towards open and transparent governance, democracy and rule of law. It provides information on the work of the parliament and the laws of Zimbabwe, and makes public domain information widely available, advancing the cause of human rights. Veritas was instrumental to the progress of the Death Penalty Abolition Bill. Following many years of advocacy, it supported Edwin Mushoriwa MP to introduce the private members' bill and helped to see it through the lengthy law-making process.

## What remains of the death penalty in Africa?

Zimbabwe's abolition tips the scales even closer towards continent-wide abolition of the death penalty across Africa. There are only six retentionist countries in Africa – countries that retain the death penalty and have carried out an execution in the past 10 years. The pace of reform is faster in Africa than anywhere else in the world.

Zimbabwe joins Ghana, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic and Chad in having abolished the death penalty for all crimes or ordinary crimes since 2020.

With Zimbabwe joining the ranks of abolitionist countries, we anticipate that it will have implications for reform on the death penalty in countries such as Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania.

We hope other countries in the region that still retain capital punishment will adopt the same principles that have shaped Zimbabwe's progress towards abolition – that the death penalty is a cruel, inhuman punishment that has no place in their criminal justice system.

**“The Death Penalty Abolition Act is a historic step towards justice. This marks a significant milestone in our nation's journey towards human rights and dignity”**  
– Val Ingham-Thorpe,  
Director of Veritas

## What happens after abolition?

Once a country has abolished the death penalty, we continue to provide assistance to policymakers, diplomats and civil society. While priorities vary, based on the context and the laws that achieve abolition, this may include advocating on behalf of people remaining on death row, advancing sentencing guidelines for former capital offences and encouraging ratification of international treaties on the death penalty.

In Ghana, for example, the law that abolished the death penalty in July 2023 was not retrospective, so it did not apply to people already on death row. Presently, 170 men and six women remain on death row. Advocating for the commutation of their sentences will require sustained engagement. In Sierra Leone, following the passing of the Abolition of the Death Penalty Act in 2021, there was a need to clarify new sentencing provisions for offences that formerly would have carried the death penalty. This led to the ongoing work drafting new sentencing guidelines and holding consultations with the judiciary, lawyers, government agencies and civil society.

Finally, while countries such as Ghana, Sierra Leone and now Zimbabwe have abolished the death penalty in domestic law, we seek to encourage them to ring-fence this by ratifying international treaties, such as the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which ban executions and the reintroduction of capital punishment. They would join more than 90 states that have made such a commitment to ensure that the death penalty could not be reintroduced by subsequent government administrations.

# Our legal casework: uncovering miscarriages of justice

In every criminal trial, there is the potential for a miscarriage of justice. By challenging unfair and unlawful practices in individual cases, we seek to create change and encourage the development of fairer and safer criminal justice systems. Here, we share **the stories of two individuals who spent a combined total of 30 years in prison before their convictions were quashed and they were released.** This was avoidable if the courts had more robust mechanisms to uncover miscarriages of justice.

## Julian Washington's story

**Duties of expert witnesses: Convicted for a murder he did not commit in 2014, Julian spent almost 10 years in prison following mistakes made by an expert witness at his trial. His case underscores the need for expert witnesses to act impartially when giving evidence.**

In January 2012, Stefan Burgess was killed and Davano Jahkai Brimmer was injured following a shooting in Bermuda. Julian Washington was arrested and charged with murder. He was 20 years old.

The case against Julian was based on forensic evidence. During the trial, the prosecution told the jury that DNA evidence showed that samples on bullet casings found at the scene matched DNA from Julian's clothes. Julian always maintained his innocence. He also had an alibi for the night of the shooting, and his girlfriend gave evidence at trial that Julian could not have been at the scene of the crime.

However, the prosecution's expert told the jury that there was a "1 in 46 million" chance that Julian did not contribute to the DNA samples found at the scene of the murder. The case against him seemed insurmountable. The jury found Julian guilty and, in 2014, he was sentenced



to life imprisonment, with a minimum term of 30 years.

Eight years later, in 2022, The Death Penalty Project agreed to assist Julian with his case, alongside lawyers in Bermuda, barristers from the UK and forensic experts from the United States of America. Working together, the team showed that the DNA expert at trial had made serious mistakes. Their analysis was circular and their evidence misleading.

These errors were so serious that, prior to the hearing before the Privy Council, the Bermudan Government conceded that the DNA evidence was flawed, and that Julian's conviction was unsafe. He was **released from prison in May 2024** on unconditional bail. His conviction was finally **quashed by the Privy Council in October 2024**, and it was held that there was an "obvious" need for a review of all cases between 2006 and 2015 where the prosecution relied on similar DNA analysis. This review is under way in Bermuda and may lead to further miscarriages of justice being uncovered.

## Nardis Maynard's story

**System failure: Having spent 20 years in prison, Nardis was freed after the court criticised his legal team at trial and the poor quality of evidence relied upon by the prosecution.**

More than 20 years ago, in July 2004, Ernest Henry was stabbed and killed on the Caribbean island of St Kitts and Nevis. Bystanders gave descriptions of the killer to police, none of which identified Nardis, nor was there any forensic evidence implicating Nardis.

However, two days after the murder, Nardis was arrested. Following his arrest, the police re-interviewed witnesses, who then identified Nardis by name. Nardis maintained that he was at home at the time of the offence, with his brother and sister.

Standing trial in July 2004, Nardis was let down by his legal team. His brother and sister were not called to give alibi evidence. No witness statements had been taken from them; both would have said that Nardis was at home on the night of the murder. Nardis was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.

**'[Nardis] is a free man with a clean record and is on top of the world. He expresses his thanks to the entire team for believing in his case and seeing it through to the end. He's gone to see his mother, who's not doing well, but thankfully has lived to see the day her son is free' – Talibah Byron, Nardis's lawyer in St Kitts**

Pictured: Nardis Maynard with Talibah Byron, his lawyer.  
Photo credit: Talibah Byron



His lawyers lodged an appeal against his conviction, which was heard in 2006. Without asking his permission, the legal team abandoned his appeal. Nobody told Nardis about the outcome of this appeal. His lead counsel at trial would later go on to give evidence that he had not spoken to Nardis at any point before, during or after the trial.

Nardis did not find out what had happened to his appeal for eight years. When he did, he wrote to us. We put together a team of lawyers in the UK and St Kitts, and began to prepare another appeal.

We took Nardis's case back to the Court of Appeal in St Kitts and Nevis in 2020 and then to the Privy Council in 2022. At a hearing in 2024, judges were highly critical of Nardis's legal team at his original trial and first appeal. The court would go on to raise concerns that the witnesses had only identified Nardis after speaking to a police officer who had given them information about the case.

The Privy Council **quashed Nardis's conviction in August 2024**. We wrote to the prosecuting authorities, pointing out the weaknesses in the case.

The prosecution agreed not to seek a re-trial. **Nardis was released in November 2024** and reunited with his family after 20 years.

# Hollow promises: Taiwan resumes executions

In January 2025, **Taiwan carried out an execution for the first time in nearly five years**. Huang Lin-kai and his legal team were given less than four hours' notice of his execution, which took place while an appeal was pending – an indefensible disregard for the rule of law, the rights to life and due process enshrined in the Taiwanese Constitution.

In September 2024, the **Constitutional Court of Taiwan had handed down a judgment** aimed at bolstering the protections afforded to those facing death sentences. The landmark legal challenge was brought to the Constitutional Court by our partners TAEDP, on behalf of the 37 people on death row in Taiwan at the time. For over 10 years, we have worked with TAEDP on a variety of litigation, research, training and engagement strategies to challenge the use of the death penalty.

In its judgment, the court disappointingly chose to evade the central question of

the constitutionality of the death penalty. It did not take the opportunity to strike down capital punishment altogether, which would have saved Huang Lin-kai's life (see facing page). Looking to Taiwan's international obligations, the court determined that the death penalty could only be imposed in the most serious cases of intentional homicide and that mentally ill defendants could not be sentenced to death or executed. Crucially, the court also mandated that legal representation must be provided to all defendants at trial and on appeal, and that for a death sentence to be imposed or upheld, the judges must be unanimous in all capital proceedings.

The government was given a period of two years to bring the criminal law of Taiwan into compliance with the judgment, a fact which made the execution in early 2025 all the more disturbing. Many of those currently on death row have filed extraordinary appeals, since the court's judgment.

Ahead of the hearing in April 2024, we were invited by the National Human Rights Commission to submit detailed legal analysis as to why the death penalty is arbitrary, irrational, disproportionate and contrary to the rule of law. We also worked with Professor Carolyn Hoyle, from the University of Oxford, and Professor Jeffrey Fagan from Columbia University, to provide expert evidence on the inherent arbitrariness of capital punishment and why the death penalty has no significant deterrent effect.



DPP and other experts gather at an international conference in Taiwan, ahead of World Day Against the Death Penalty. Photo credit: TAEDP



## Why take the death penalty to court?

While the outcome of this legal challenge in Taiwan was not what we hoped for, we remain confident in the work we are undertaking to support local legal teams bringing challenges to the death penalty per se in Guyana, Kenya and Nigeria.

There are two routes to abolition: judicial and political. The majority of countries that abolish the death penalty do so through the political process, with a bill brought before parliament or a presidential decree. We pursue abolition through the courts, either when it is necessary to advance an argument on the constitutionality of capital punishment or where there may be a lack of political support.

Our strategy behind these legal challenges rests on three decades of expertise in demonstrating that the death penalty is arbitrary, cruel and inhuman, and that it offends human dignity. In each of these challenges, we are providing technical guidance and support to local lawyers, based on our experience in successfully challenging the imposition and application of the death penalty, dramatically restricting the use of the death penalty in many countries. These new challenges, seeking to abolish it entirely, build on our previous work before constitutional courts and international tribunals.

## The reality of executions in Taiwan

Huang Lin-kai was executed on January 16, 2025. He was sedated, made to lie face down and shot through the back of his heart at 10:02pm. The Minister of Justice had signed his execution warrant earlier the same day, leaving no time for a final visit from his family.

Earlier that evening, Huang Lin-kai's legal team submitted an appeal for a retrial with the Taipei High Court and sought a review of the case, to determine whether it met the due process requirements in the Constitutional Court's ruling. Regardless, the Ministry of Justice unreasonably proceeded with the execution, giving no

assurances to Huang Lin-kai's legal team that his trial and appeal had been fair.

The people currently on death row remain uncertain of their future. At least half have been on death row for more than 20 years.

**“The government’s actions cast a shadow over Taiwan’s image as a democratic society committed to human rights. History will not forget the decision made to end the life of Huang Lin-kai”**

– The Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty

# Supporting British nationals facing the death penalty

What would you do if you found yourself in another country being prosecuted for an offence that carried a death sentence? Non-nationals of a country face particular disadvantages in criminal trials. Language barriers, an unfamiliarity with local legal systems and a lack of awareness of legal rights may all play a factor in unfair outcomes.

For more than 20 years, we have supported British nationals who are at risk of a death sentence or currently facing a death sentence abroad. We offer support to their local legal teams to challenge the use and imposition of capital punishment, and to ensure that the highest standards of due process are upheld.

Our team works with lawyers around the world who are representing British nationals facing capital sentences. We bring together legal, medical and forensic experts to support British nationals and ensure that they are provided with effective legal representation before all domestic courts and international tribunals.

This year, we supported **12 people** in capital proceedings across seven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Our legal team has provided advice and assistance across a wide range of legal issues. We have:

- raised allegations of torture and mistreatment by prosecuting authorities;
- instructed experts to provide clinical assessments for individuals whose mental health is a relevant factor in their defence;
- worked to ensure that trials are heard in a timely fashion where there have been years of delay, leaving individuals languishing in prison unnecessarily; and
- provided advice in cases where a defendant has been unlawfully abducted to a jurisdiction to face capital proceedings.

In every case, our goal is to ensure that individuals have a fair trial, and that domestic and international law is upheld. Through decades of experience advocating for individuals before constitutional courts and international tribunals, we are well placed to support legal teams representing individuals facing capital punishment.





Youssouf Ezangi.  
Photo credit: CHRIS MILOSI/  
EPA-EFE/Shutterstock.

## Youssouf Ezangi's story

**Right to a fair trial: Unlawfully tried before a military tribunal in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2024, Youssouf Ezangi has been a victim of serious human rights violations. We have supported his local legal team and raised his case with international bodies to ensure that his rights are protected.**

In September 2024, a military tribunal in the DRC sentenced 37 people to death in a single trial. Among these was a British national, Youssouf Ezangi. Earlier that year, the DRC lifted its moratorium on the death penalty, allowing for a resumption of executions and placing Youssouf and his co-defendants at real risk of execution.

The death penalty is the mandatory punishment for the offences with which Youssouf was charged. The mandatory death penalty has been recognised across the globe as cruel, inhuman and arbitrary punishment. It is a violation of international law to impose a death sentence without giving a defendant all the guarantees of a fair trial, including the opportunity to offer mitigation before sentence is passed.

Following the judgment of the military court, we ensured that the

case was drawn to the attention of international bodies that safeguard fundamental rights. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial summary or arbitrary executions, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights have been requested to investigate allegations of serious human rights violations.

Concerns have been raised about the fairness of the trial. This included allegations of torture on arrest, the defendants being tried before a military tribunal rather than a civilian court, legal aid being withheld, and the trial being rushed, limiting the ability of Youssouf and his co-defendants to bring evidence to court.

We continue to work with Youssouf's legal team in the DRC, political actors and international bodies to fight for Youssouf's right to a fair trial and all the protections of the law. By raising his case with international bodies and supporting his legal team, we hope to ensure that the human rights violations he has been subjected to are remedied and his death sentence quashed.

# Our casework in the Caribbean: spotlight on Belize

The Death Penalty Project's work began with a few lawyers dedicated to working on death penalty cases in the Commonwealth Caribbean. When we started this work in the 1990s, providing free legal representation for people in capital appeals before the Privy Council, the threat of execution was imminent and real. At the time, the death penalty was a mandatory sentence for all convicted of murder.

**Fast-forward 30 years and some things have changed drastically for the better in Caribbean criminal justice systems: no one has been executed in the region since**

**2008. The *mandatory* death penalty has been repealed in every Caribbean country except Trinidad and Tobago.**

There are now 13 'abolitionist de facto' countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean – those that retain the death penalty in law but have not carried out an execution in more than 10 years. Nevertheless, the continued possibility of death sentences shapes criminal justice systems for the worse. Death sentences and executions are an ever-present risk, as the punishment could be reintroduced in response to political shifts. Even where executions are not carried out, receiving a death sentence exacts a hidden, but heavy, psychological toll on people who are stigmatised and outcast on death row.

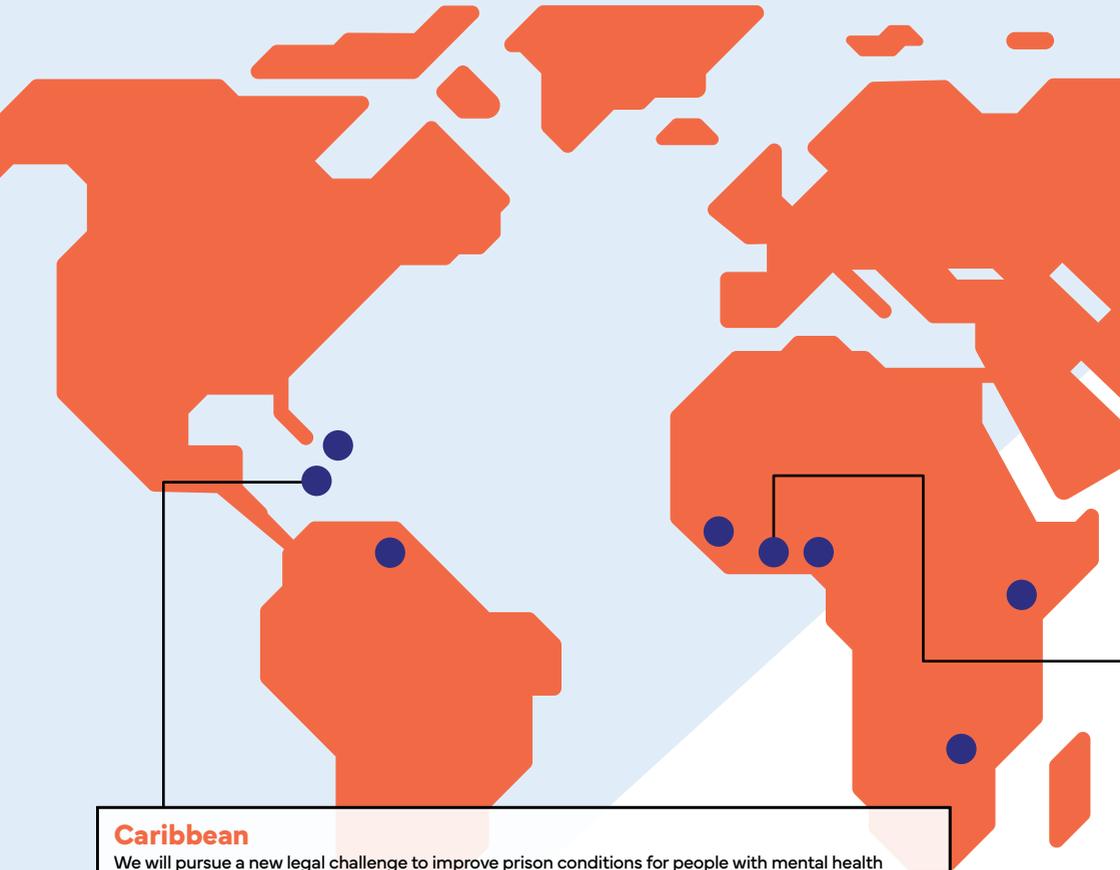
Belize is one of these 'abolitionist de facto' countries; it retains the death penalty in law, but it has not carried out an execution since 1985. No new death sentences have been imposed since 2005 and there has been nobody on death row since 2015.

For many years, we have worked in Belize providing free legal representation to every person on death row since the 1990s, improving prison conditions through investigative research, and training the





# What's next for 2025?



## Caribbean

We will pursue a new legal challenge to improve prison conditions for people with mental health difficulties in **Jamaica**, in partnership with **Jamaicans for Justice** and **Stand Up for Jamaica**. Alongside this, we continue to advance a twofold legal challenge to the death penalty per se in **Guyana**, to place the legality of the death penalty squarely before the court. We will be bringing challenges on behalf of those currently sentenced to death, to ensure they do not languish on death row for years. We will also assist former death row prisoners who may have been impacted by the conditions on death row.

We will bring together partners from the region to develop a **coordinated strategy** to work towards abolition in law, drawing on empirical evidence that promotes informed dialogue.

In **The Bahamas**, we have been invited by the Chief Justice to work with the sentencing commission for the development of sentencing guidelines for serious offences. Presently, judges have discretion when sentencing people for murder, manslaughter, robbery and sexual offences, and there is a need to develop a framework that assists in determining the appropriate length of sentences.

Throughout the **Caribbean region**, we will continue to provide free legal representation to assist people currently and formerly on death row, as well as individual cases of miscarriage of justice. This will be through appeals to the Privy Council and the Caribbean Court of Justice, as well as applications to other regional and international tribunals where relevant.



## South Asia

Planned work in **Bangladesh** this year was deferred in response to momentous political developments. Now, with opportunities to engage with a new interim government, we will support our partner the **Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)** to deliver a series of workshops with judges, lawyers and mental health professionals, bridging gaps in knowledge of mental health, forensic psychiatry and capital sentencing. Together with BLAST, we will also develop the outline for sentencing guidelines, addressing the disparities in death sentences handed down by different judges in Bangladesh.

New research will be undertaken in partnership with the University of Dhaka, investigating the effectiveness of legal representation provided to people under sentence of death. Our **previous study** with the University of Dhaka and BLAST revealed that most people on death row in Bangladesh are from the most vulnerable and marginalised sections of society.

## East Asia & Southeast Asia

Since 2022, we have been carrying out a **research project** into the deterrent effect of the death penalty for drug-related offences in **Indonesia** with the DPRU at the University of Oxford. We will complete this study and use the findings to inform engagement with policymakers in Indonesia, challenging the use of capital punishment for offences that do not meet the threshold of the most serious crimes under international law. We will draw out regional policy implications and hold discussions with stakeholders in **Malaysia** and **Singapore**, both of which also impose the death penalty for drug trafficking.

In **Taiwan**, we will support our partner TAEDP as it provides legal representation to the 36 people on death row. We will train and support lawyers as they file extraordinary appeals in each of these cases.

## Africa

**Sierra Leone** and **Ghana** have abolished the death penalty in recent years. We will keep engaging with judiciary, legislators and other partners to advocate for ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the only international instrument aimed at abolition of the death penalty. In Ghana, we will also work with partners to ensure people still on death row are fairly resented or have their sentences commuted.

Following abolition of the death penalty in **Zimbabwe**, we will support Veritas to ensure that people on death row are fairly resented.

In **Kenya**, we will continue providing expert legal assistance to a challenge to the constitutionality of the death penalty with the **Katiba Institute**. Alongside the **Kenya National Commission on Human Rights**, we will engage with civil society groups and bring together political stakeholders and other partners to discuss opportunities to promote abolition through new legislation.

Contrary to the African regional trend towards abolition, **Nigeria** is expanding its use of the death penalty and has more than 3,500 people on death row. Working closely with our partner **The Legal Defence and Assistance Project (LEDAP)**, we will engage with civil society organisations and policymakers in an effort to abolish the death penalty through the legislative process, and bring a legal challenge to the death penalty per se through the courts.

# Our funders and supporters

The Death Penalty Project deeply appreciates the funding and support it receives from:

## Our host:

- Simons Muirhead Burton LLP

## Statutory funders:

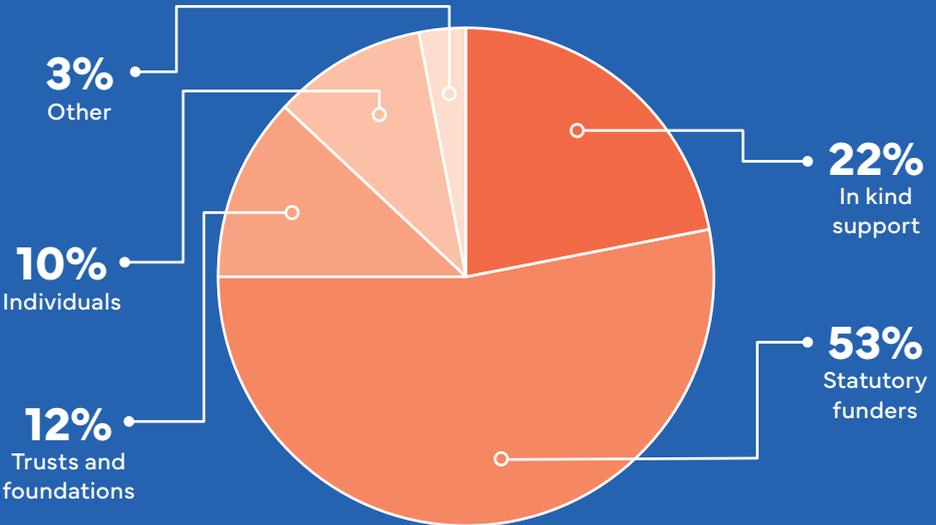
- UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- The Global Consortium for Death Penalty Abolition, led by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and funded by the European Union

## Trusts and foundations:

- The Capital Cases Charitable Trust
- The David & Elaine Potter Foundation
- The Hasluck Charitable Trust
- The Lucid Foundation and Horizon Line
- The Roddick Foundation
- The Souter Charitable Trust
- The Zitrin Foundation

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- Lady Edwina Grosvenor
- All our other individual and anonymous donors



The Death Penalty Project has two legal entities – a charitable trust (no. 1115035) and a limited company (no. 05579286). The charitable trust is a sister charity that provides funds to the limited company. They have a joint framework agreement and separate governance structures. We receive grants and donations from statutory, institutional and individual donors to both entities, depending on the preference of each donor.

# Our staff

We are extremely grateful for the commitment and tenacity of our hard-working team, as well as the support we receive from interns and volunteers.



We also extend thanks to our Trustees, Directors and Patrons for their support:

## Trustees and Directors

Anthony Burton CBE  
Edward Fitzgerald KC CBE  
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Afua Hirsch (stepped down in 2024)  
Parvais Jabbar MBE  
Saul Lehrfreund MBE  
Joseph Middleton KC  
Razi Mireskandari  
Andrew Rodger (joined in 2024)

## Patrons

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The Death Penalty Project  
87-91 Newman Street  
London  
W1T 3EY

[www.deathpenaltyproject.org](http://www.deathpenaltyproject.org)

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