

Amnesty International has released its *Death Sentences and Executions Report 2015*. This report covers the judicial use of the death penalty for the period January to December 2015. Amnesty reports only on executions, death sentences and other aspects of the use of the death penalty, such as commutations and exonerations, where there is reasonable confirmation. In many countries governments do not publish information on their use of the death penalty, making confirmation of the use challenging.

On 17 and 18 November 2015 the *UN Committee against Torture* considered the periodic report of China. The Committee expressed concern about “the lack of specific data on the application of the death penalty, which prevented it from verifying whether this new legislation is actually being applied in practice”, and about reports of people on death row being held in shackles for 24 hours a day. The Committee encouraged the authorities “to establish a moratorium on executions and commute all existing death sentences, and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.”

Organ harvesting

The Committee further called on China to “ensure that the death row regime does not amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” by ending the use of restraints on death row prisoners and by ensuring that the removal of organs from executed prisoners “only takes place on the basis of informed consent and that compensation is provided to the relatives of convicted persons whose organs were removed without their consent”. The Committee also requested that Chinese authorities “commission an independent investigation to look into claims that some Falun Gong practitioners may have been subjected to this practice”.

Read full report [here](#)