



Advanced Level **UN calls for death penalty abolition**

A United Nations committee has voted for an immediate worldwide freeze on the use of the death penalty. A total of 99 countries voted in favor of a suspension of capital punishment, while 52 opposed the proposal and the remaining 33 nations did not vote. Those who campaigned against the death penalty said the abolition would "contribute to the enhancement and progressive development of human rights." They said capital punishment has not been a deterrent for crimes and many innocent people are still put to death by mistake. British ambassador to the UN Sir John Sawers said the vote showed that international opinion has changed in the past decade: "We now have a global coalition and I think it's an important sign that the death penalty is increasingly unpopular and is seen as unreliable," he said.

The vote followed two days of heated and at times bad-tempered discussions. Singapore, the USA, China, Syria and Libya were among those wanting to keep the death penalty. Singapore's ambassador Vanu Gopala Menon was very vocal in his support of it. He was angry at the European Union because it voted for a ban on capital punishment. He accused the EU of improperly linking the death penalty with human rights and said it was imposing its "values" on the rest of the world. He blasted the EU for trying "to force through a resolution that a significant number of other countries do not agree with." He argued that countries have a "right to determine the legal measures and penalties which are appropriate for their societies, including the death penalty for the most serious crimes"

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TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true or false:

- a. The UN has banned the use of the death penalty around the world.
- b. 33 countries voted against the abolition of the death penalty.
- c. Many countries believe the death penalty does not deter crime.
- d. International opinion towards the death penalty has changed.
- e. The discussions at the UN were, in general, good-natured.
- f. Singapore's ambassador spoke strongly in favor of abolition.
- g. Singapore's ambassador was very angry with the European Union.
- h. The ambassador said countries needed to decide for themselves.

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. freeze | a. strengthening |
| 2. abolition | b. alliance |
| 3. enhancement | c. decide |
| 4. deterrent | d. ending |
| 5. coalition | e. stormy |
| 6. heated | f. outspoken |
| 7. vocal | g. suspension |
| 8. imposing | h. scolded |
| 9. blasted | i. obstacle |
| 10. determine | j. forcing |

PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. an immediate worldwide freeze on | a. deterrent for crimes |
| 2 in favor of a suspension | b. through a resolution |
| 3. the enhancement and progressive | c. of capital punishment |
| 4. capital punishment has not been a | d. bad-tempered discussions |
| 5. We now have a global | e. with human rights |
| 6. heated and at times | f. development of human rights |
| 7. Menon was very vocal | g. coalition |
| 8. improperly linking the death penalty | h. measures and penalties |
| 9. He blasted the EU for trying to force | i. the use of the death penalty |
| 10. a right to determine the legal | j. in his support |