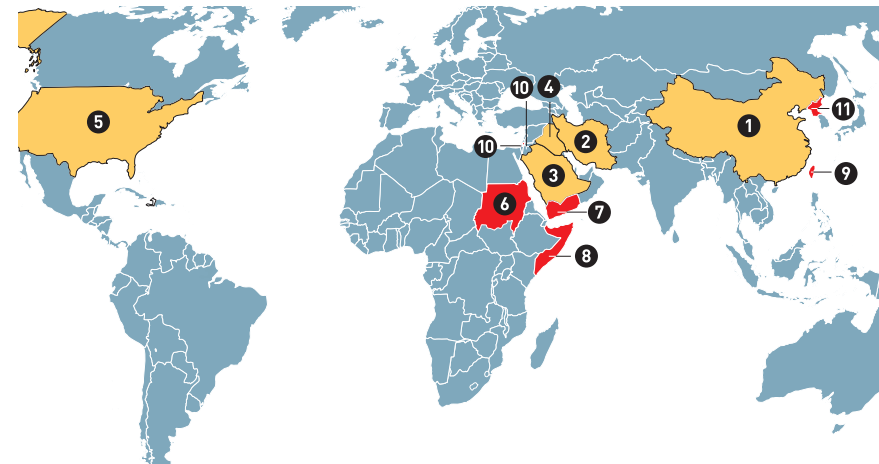


Source: Amnesty International; Prison Statistics India

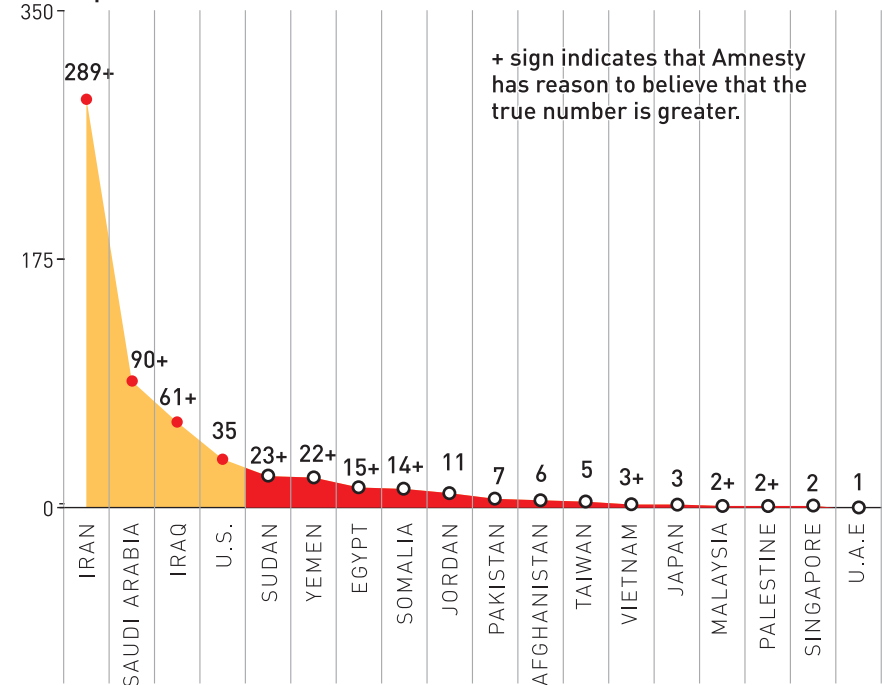
The death penalty

Many countries, including India, use it to tackle real or perceived threats. BY R.K. RADHAKRISHNAN

Countries and executions 2014



Reported executions 2014



+ sign indicates that Amnesty has reason to believe that the true number is greater.

- 1 China**
Carried out more executions than the rest of the world combined but figures remain a state secret.
- 2 Iran**
In addition to the 289 executions officially announced, Amnesty International believes at least 454 more were carried out.
- 3 Saudi Arabia**
More than half of the executions were for non-lethal crimes.
- 4 Iraq**
Death sentences were often passed after grossly unfair trials.
- 5 United States**
Fewer executions and a decrease in death sentences imposed.
- 6 Sudan**
Civilians prosecuted in military courts that carry the death penalty.
- 7 Yemen**
Increase in the number of executions.
- 8 Somalia**
Fewer executions recorded.
- 9 Taiwan**
Five executions; One crime removed from the list of capital offences.
- 10 Palestine, Gaza Strip**
Executions and death sentences in Hamas-controlled Gaza, occupied Palestinian territories.
- 11 North Korea**
Executions after unfair trials, if any, and often for non-lethal crimes such as corruption.

Every time a judge in an Indian court uses the term "rarest of rare", what follows is the pronouncement of the death penalty. It appears that the judges go by the crime and the proven charges and then pronounce the maximum punishment. Amnesty International's latest report, "Death Sentence and Executions in 2014," says

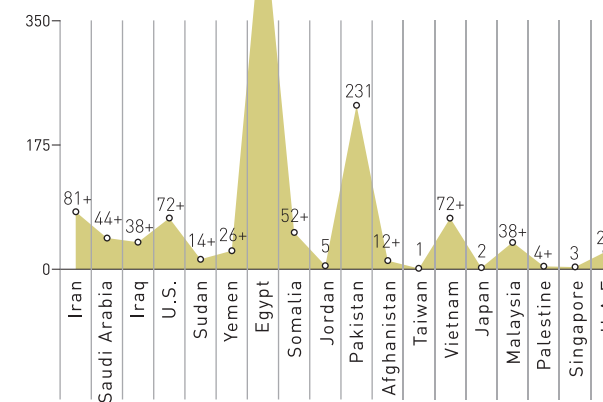
that 64 persons were sentenced to death in 2014, down from 72 in 2013. Though 72 persons were sentenced to death in 2013, one hanging was carried out (that of Afzal Guru, who was convicted on a terror charge that activists say was deeply flawed). Actually, there have only been three executions in

India in the past decade, including that of Guru and the lone terrorist who was captured live after the 26/11 attack on Mumbai, Ajmal Kasab. From 2007 to 2014, as many as 649 persons were sentenced to death.

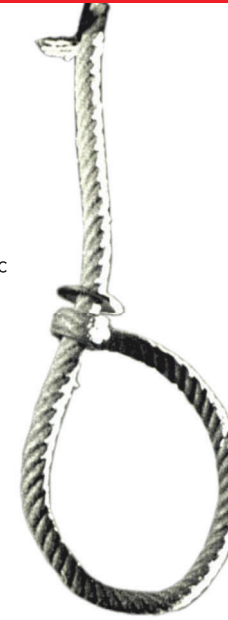
Two terror convicts, who were in public memory because of the serious nature of the incidents they were said to be involved in, are on death row: the 2000 Red Fort attack accused Mohammad Arif, whose mercy petition is pending,

Reported death sentences 2014

+ sign indicates that Amnesty has reason to believe that the true number is greater.



and the 1993 Bombay serial blasts accused Yakub Memon, whose petition the President has rejected. Both have moved the Supreme Court. With the Supreme Court laying down guidelines, there can be no more secret hangings. On January 21, 2013, a Bench led by then Chief Justice of India P. Sathasivam laid down guidelines requiring the government to give at least 14 days' notice before an execution "to allow the prisoner to prepare himself... (and) have a last and final meeting with his family members". Amnesty notes that an alarming number of countries used the death penalty to tackle real or perceived threats to state security linked to terrorism, crime or internal instability in 2014. At least 607 people were executed in 22 countries and at least 2,466 men and women were sentenced to death in 55 countries in 2014 alone, the Amnesty report says. "But, alarming as they are, the figures paint a partial picture of the true extent to which people are hanged, shot or given the lethal injection across the world. The



The Indian situation 2013

State/UT	Number of prisoners awarded capital punishment during the year	Number of prisoners whose sentence commuted to life imprisonment during the year
Andhra Pradesh	0	0
Arunachal Pradesh	0	0
Assam	2	5
Bihar	19	22
Chhattisgarh	11	3
Goa	0	0
Gujarat	2	1
Haryana	7	2
Himachal Pradesh	1	0
Jammu & Kashmir	2	4
Jharkhand	9	1
Karnataka	4	21
Kerala	1	0
Madhya Pradesh	22	1
Maharashtra	13	16
Manipur	0	0
Meghalaya	0	0
Mizoram	0	0
Nagaland	0	0
Odisha	0	0
Punjab	0	11
Rajasthan	3	2
Sikkim	0	0
Tamil Nadu	1	2
Tripura	1	1
Uttar Pradesh	11	14
Uttarakhand	1	0
West Bengal	3	2
Total (States)	113	108
A & N Islands	1	0
Chandigarh	0	2
D & N Haveli	0	0
Daman & Diu	0	0
Delhi	11	5
Lakshadweep	0	0
Puducherry	0	0
Total (UTs)	12	7
Total (All-India)	125	115

Only one execution was carried out in 2013.

reality is likely to be much gloomier but many governments refuse to come clean about how many people they kill each year. In countries such as Eritrea, Malaysia, North Korea and Syria, very little information about the use of the death penalty is available due to restrictive state practice or political instability," the report adds.