

Hon. Commissioner Idrissa Sow, Chairperson of the Working Group on Death Penalty in Africa addresses the UN Human Rights Council, calls on States to step up efforts towards abolition of the death penalty

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Speaking at the UN Human Rights Council, during a High-Level Panel on the question of death penalty, organized on 28 February 2023 as part of the 52d Session of the UN Human Rights Council, Hon. Commissioner Idrissa Sow, called for increased efforts towards abolition of the death penalty on the continent. Commissioner Sow highlighted the ongoing abolitionist trend on the continent, pointing to the progress achieved to date, with 26 African countries who have abolished the death penalty, while 18 other countries have adopted a moratorium on executions.

Speaking to the specific focus of the panel, Commissioner Sow mentioned that the death penalty continues to be carried out on the African continent with risks of error due to the weaknesses observed in the judicial systems in some countries. He observed that, keeping with its jurisprudence, the African Commission has been engaging with those States who retain the death penalty, consistently urging the latter to limit the application of the death penalty to the most serious crimes – where the crime is intentional, and results in lethal or extremely grave consequences – and consider establishing a moratorium on executions. He indicated that the African Commission remains committed to achieving universal abolition and stressed the need to step up efforts and develop partnerships, including with OHCHR.

The Working Group on Death Penalty, Extrajudicial, Summary and Arbitrary Killings was established in 2005. Its current work focuses, among other things, on the promotion of adoption of the draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the abolition of the death penalty.

[\[Watch the whole video\]](#)

