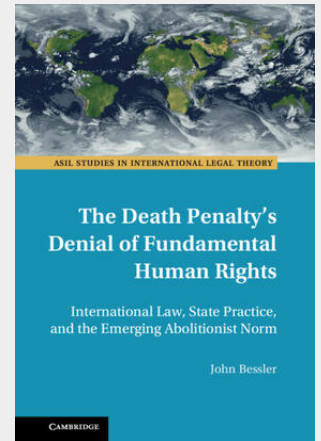


Bessler

## The Death Penalty's Denial of Fundamental Human Rights

International Law, State Practice, and the Emerging Abolitionist Norm

The Death Penalty's Denial of Fundamental Human Rights details how capital punishment violates universal human rights—to life; to be free from torture and other forms of cruelty; to be treated in a non-arbitrary, non-discriminatory manner; and to dignity. In tracing the evolution of the world's understanding of torture, which now absolutely prohibits physical and psychological torture, the book argues that an immutable characteristic of capital punishment—already outlawed in many countries and American states—is that it makes use of death threats. Mock executions and other credible death threats, in fact, have long been treated as torturous acts. When crime victims are threatened with death and are helpless to prevent their deaths, for example, courts routinely find such threats inflict psychological torture. With simulated executions and non-lethal corporal punishments already prohibited as torturous acts, death sentences and real executions, the book contends, must be classified as torturous acts, too.



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