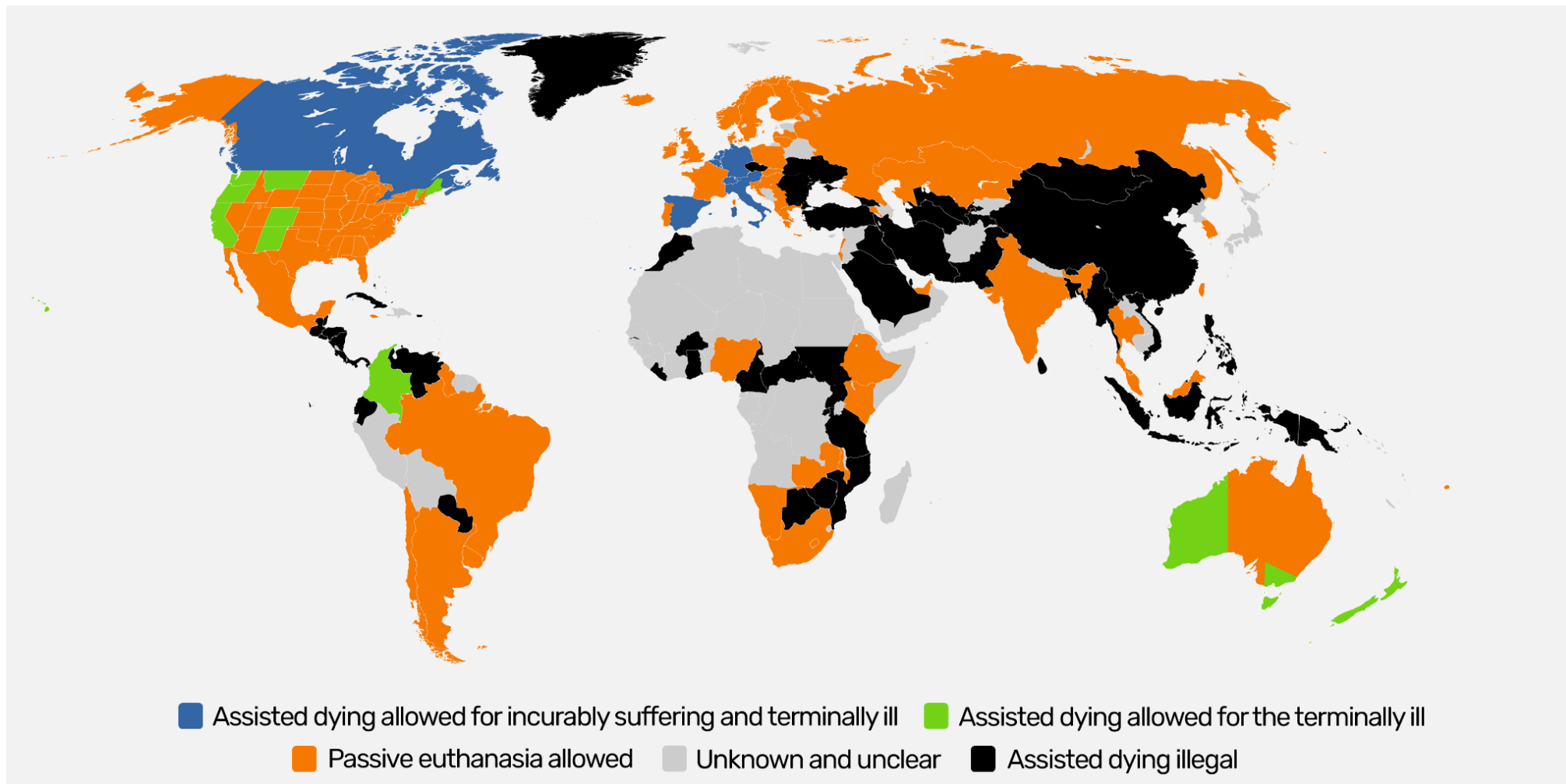


MAPPING ASSISTED DYING LAWS AROUND THE WORLD

Briefing from Humanists UK, 2021



ASSISTED DYING LAWS AROUND THE WORLD - AN EXPLANATORY KEY

The term 'assisted dying' refers to when active steps are taken to end someone's life. This can include 'voluntary euthanasia', which is when somebody requests assistance to die but the ultimate fatal act is carried out by another person, such as a doctor. It can also mean 'assisted suicide', which is when the individual carries out the fatal act themselves. For the purposes of this map, 'assisted dying laws' encompasses jurisdictions where assisted dying is both legalised or decriminalised. This either means that specific legislation currently exists to govern the practice thereby making it lawful, or that the activity is not unlawful in the absence of specific legislation, or does not carry a criminal penalty. This map is accurate at the time of publication.

Someone who is **terminally ill or incurably suffering** can lawfully access an assisted death in [Austria](#), [Belgium](#), [Canada](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#),¹ [Luxembourg](#), the [Netherlands](#),² [Spain](#),³ and [Switzerland](#).

Assisted dying is, or will soon become, specifically lawful for those with **terminal illnesses** (meaning that they have been diagnosed with a condition that will lead to death within six or fewer months) in [Colombia](#), the US states of [California](#), [Colorado](#), [Hawaii](#), [Maine](#), [New Jersey](#), [New Mexico](#), [Montana](#), [Oregon](#), [Vermont](#), [Washington](#), [Washington DC](#), and in the Australian states of [Tasmania](#), [Victoria](#), [Western Australia](#)⁴. Following a nationwide referendum, assisted dying is due to become legal in [New Zealand](#).

A form of **voluntary passive euthanasia**⁵ is known to be legal in [Albania](#), [Argentina](#), [Armenia](#), [Austria](#), [Belgium](#), [Brazil](#), [Canada](#), [Chile](#), [Croatia](#), [Denmark](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Fiji](#), [France](#), [Finland](#), [Germany](#), [Gibraltar](#), [Greece](#), [Guyana](#), [Hungary](#), [Hong Kong](#), [Iceland](#), [India](#), [Israel](#), [Italy](#), [Jamaica](#), [Kenya](#),

¹ Following the judgment of Italy's constitutional court, those who assist another person to die will no longer face prosecution if they assist someone who has made an autonomous and freely informed decision, who was in a state of intolerable and irreversible suffering, and was being kept alive by life-support treatments.

² Assisted dying is also permitted in three of the Netherlands' Antilles ([Bonaire](#), [St Eustatius and Saba](#)).

³ Spain's law extends to its [autonomous exclaves](#), including Ceuta and Melilla. Its two archipelagos (the [Canary Islands](#) and [Balearic Islands](#)) have separate regulations permitting legal assisted dying. Voluntary passive euthanasia is also permitted in Spain's [overseas territories](#).

⁴ In 1995 the semi-autonomous [Northern Territory](#) briefly introduced legislation [permitting assisted dying](#) for those who were terminally ill. This Act was later repealed when the Federal Government passed the [1997 Euthanasia Laws Act](#) which banned territories from legislating on this matter.

⁵ 'Voluntary passive euthanasia' refers to the cessation or refusal of life-sustaining medical treatment, which will eventually result in death.



[Kazakhstan](#), [Latvia](#), [Lebanon](#), [Lesotho](#), [Liechtenstein](#), [Lithuania](#), [Luxembourg](#), [North Macedonia](#), [Malawi](#), [Malaysia](#), [Mexico](#),⁶ [Netherlands](#), [Namibia](#), [New Zealand](#), [Nigeria](#), [Norway](#), [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Republic of Ireland](#), [Russia](#), [Serbia](#), [Singapore](#), [Slovakia](#), [Slovenia](#), [South Africa](#), [South Korea](#), [Spain](#), [Sweden](#), [Switzerland](#), [Taiwan](#), [Thailand](#), [Trinidad and Tobago](#), [United Arab Emirates](#), [United Kingdom](#),⁷ [United States](#),⁸ [Uruguay](#), and [Zambia](#).

Assisted dying is **unlawful** in [Albania](#),⁹ [Argentina](#), [Armenia](#), [Australia](#), [The Bahamas](#), [Bahrain](#), [Bangladesh](#), [Barbados](#), [Belize](#), [Bermuda](#), [Bhutan](#), [Bolivia](#), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), [Botswana](#), [Brazil](#), [British Virgin Islands](#), [Brunei](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Burkina Faso](#), [Burma](#), [Cameroon](#), [Cape Verde](#), [Cayman Islands](#), [Central African Republic](#), [Chile](#), [China](#),¹⁰ [Cook Islands](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Croatia](#), [Cuba](#), [Cyprus](#), [Czechia](#), [Denmark](#), [East Timor](#), [El Salvador](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Ecuador](#), [France](#), [Fiji](#), [Gaza Strip](#), [Georgia](#), [Ghana](#), [Gibraltar](#), [Greece](#), [Greenland](#), [Guatemala](#), [Guyana](#), [Hong Kong](#), [Honduras](#), [Hungary](#), [Iceland](#), [India](#), [Ireland](#), [Isle of Man](#), [Israel](#), [Indonesia](#), [Italy](#), [Iran](#), [Iraq](#), [Jamaica](#),¹¹ [Kenya](#), [Kazakhstan](#), [Kuwait](#),¹² [Liberia](#), [Latvia](#), [Lebanon](#), [Lesotho](#), [Liechtenstein](#), [Lithuania](#), [Macau](#), [Macedonia](#), [Malawi](#), [Malta](#), [Malaysia](#), [Mexico](#), [Moldova](#), [Mongolia](#), [Montserrat](#), [Morocco](#), [Mozambique](#), [Namibia](#), [Nauru](#), [Nicaragua](#), [Nigeria](#), [Northern Mariana Islands](#), [Norway](#),¹³ [Pakistan](#), [Panama](#), [Papua New Guinea](#), [Paraguay](#), [Peru](#), [Philippines](#), [Poland](#),¹⁴ [Portugal](#),¹⁵ [Puerto Rico](#), [Qatar](#), [Romania](#), [Russia](#), [Rwanda](#), [Saints Kitts and Nevis](#), [Saint Lucia](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Serbia](#), [South Africa](#), [South Korea](#),¹⁶ [South Sudan](#), [Spain](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Sweden](#), [Taiwan](#), [Tajikistan](#), [Tanzania](#), [The Gambia](#), [Trinidad and Tobago](#), [Turkey](#), [Turkmenistan](#), [Tuvalu](#), [Uganda](#), [Ukraine](#), [United Arab Emirates](#), [United](#)

⁶ The passive withdrawal of treatment is legal in Mexico City and the states of Aguascalientes and Michoacán but remains [illegal in the remainder of the country](#).

⁷ In 2018, the Legislative Assembly of the [Falkland Islands](#) passed a motion supporting the right of terminally ill residents to die at a time and place of their own choosing, and should assisted dying legislation be introduced in the UK, the Falkland Islands will consider adopting it. In 2021, the channel island [Jersey](#) convened a Citizens' Jury on Assisted Dying. 78% of respondents advocated for the legalisation of assisted dying, which is expected to lead to a substantive vote in the Legislative Assembly.

⁸ Although the [1995 Patient Self Determination Act](#) ensures a right to voluntary passive euthanasia in all US states, the specific rules differ within different states e.g. [California](#), [Hawaii](#), [Montana](#), [Oregon](#), [Vermont](#), [Washington](#), [Washington DC](#).

⁹ It is often misreported that [Albania has no law prohibiting assisted dying](#). Although this is [strictly accurate](#), it is through the [interpretation of other laws](#) that Albania prohibits voluntary active euthanasia.

¹⁰ Although China lacks a specific law prohibiting assisted dying, it prosecutes offences as [intentional homicide](#).

¹¹ Although Jamaica's criminal code lacks a specific provision prohibiting assisted dying, it is likely someone would be found guilty of murder or culpable homicide.

¹² Although voluntary passive euthanasia is seemingly not permitted, Kuwait has [introduced legislation requiring consent](#) prior to any medical procedure.

¹³ It is understood that a [lesser sentence](#) can be imposed for the crime of assisting someone to die in Norway, if another person explicitly consents to their death.

¹⁴ It is theoretically possible for [no sentence](#) to be imposed for the crime of assisting someone to die in Poland.

¹⁵ In 2021, Portuguese lawmakers [voted to pass a bill](#) legalising assisted dying for both the terminally ill and incurably suffering. However, the Bill was appealed before Portugal's Constitutional Court declared it unconstitutional due to a lack of precise eligibility criteria – pushing proposals back to Parliament for approval.

¹⁶ In 2015, the [High Court of Pretoria](#) held that a doctor would 'not be acting unlawfully' to provide or administer lethal medication to end an individual's life. This judgment was later overturned by the [Supreme Court of Appeal](#).



[Kingdom](#),¹⁷ [Uruguay](#), [Uzbekistan](#), [Venezuela](#), [Vietnam](#), [Zambia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#). The legal status of assisted dying is **unclear** Eritrea,¹⁸ [Estonia](#),¹⁹ [Finland](#),²⁰ and Japan;²¹ it is **unknown or unclear** for Afghanistan, Algeria, American Samoa, Andorra, Angola, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, [Azerbaijan](#), Belarus, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, The Republic of Djibouti, Dominica, The Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Faroe Islands, French Guiana, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, French Polynesia, Gabon, Jordan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, New Caledonia, North Korea, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Martinique, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mayotte, The Federated States of Micronesia, Laos, Libya, Oman and Niger, Palau, Reunion, Republic of Congo, Saint Helena, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guam, St Pierre and Miquelon, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, [Senegal](#), [Sierra Leone](#), Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syria, Turks and Caicos Islands, Tunisia, Togo, Tonga, Vanuatu, Virgin Islands (US), Wallis and Futuna, West Bank, Western Sahara, and Yemen.

For more details, information, and evidence, contact Humanists UK:

Richy Thompson
Director of Public Affairs and Policy
0781 5589 636
020 7324 3072
richy@humanists.uk
humanists.uk

¹⁷ Unlike England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, Scotland [does not have a specific offence against assisted dying](#). Depending on the facts of a case, assisted dying can be addressed through homicide laws.

¹⁸ Eritrea's penal code only prohibits assisted dying on the basis of a '[selfish motive](#)'. Therefore it is theoretically permissible to assist another to die, provided that this individual had an entirely compassionate motive.

¹⁹ Estonia [lacks a specific law](#) prohibiting assisted dying, however it is possible someone would be prosecuted under homicide laws instead.

²⁰ There is no specific offence against assisted dying in Finland, however it is possible somebody could be tried under homicide laws instead.

²¹ In Japan, two local judgments in [1962 and 1995](#) indicate that it is possible to provide someone with assistance to die without breaking the law. However, despite these judgements never having been explicitly overruled, they were departed from in two criminal cases in [2005](#) and [2007](#). It has also been [suggested](#) that there may be a constitutional right under Article 13 of the Japanese Constitution to voluntary passive euthanasia, but this has never been confirmed. In 2020 [two doctors were charged for assisting the death of an adult suffering from motor neurone disease](#), further indicating that the 1962 and 1995 rulings have been implicitly overruled.

