

Treason

Treason is when a person acts against his/ her [country](#). For example, somebody might help another country fight a [war](#) against or loot his country by keeping secrets or failing to protect his [country](#). In history, treason has often included the [assassination](#) of leaders. Treason against the king was called high treason and treason against a lesser role was called petty treason. A treasonous person is called a **traitor**.

Outside the field of law, the word "traitor" can be used to describe a person who betrays a group to which he or she belongs. These accusations can often be unclear when the accused do not consider themselves to be in the group.

Some famous traitors are [Judas Iscariot](#), [Marcus Junius Brutus](#), [Benedict Arnold](#), [Philippe Pétain](#), [La Malinche](#) and [Vidkun Quisling](#).

Persons accused of treason can be many. During the [Reign of Terror](#) many thousands were executed as traitors. After [World War II](#) many thousands of Soviet soldiers who had been [prisoners of war](#) were immediately sent to [Gulag](#) as traitors.

In different countries

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Australia

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Section 80.1 of the Criminal Code in the schedule of the [Australian](#) Criminal Code Act 1995 defines treason. A person is not guilty of treason if his help is purely humanitarian.

The only appropriate punishment for treason is life in prison.

Canada

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Section 46 of the Criminal Code defines two types of treason. They are "treason" and "high treason".^[1] It is also illegal for any Canadian citizen to do anything defined in the code outside Canada.

High treason is punished by life in prison. Treason is punished by life in prison at most, or up to 14 years in prison.

New Zealand

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[New Zealand](#) has treason laws that are stated under Section 73 of the Crimes Act 1961. The punishment is life in prison, except for conspiracy. The punishment for conspiracy is 14 years at most. Treason was the last crime to be punished by death in New Zealand.

Very few people have been prosecuted for treason in New Zealand.

United States

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Treason is defined in the [United States Constitution](#) in Article III, Section 3. However, Congress has made laws that punish other actions that hurt national security. Some examples are the 1798 [Alien and Sedition Acts](#), or the 1917 [Espionage Act](#).

The punishment for treason in the United States is death or at least five years in prison, and at least a \$10,000 fine. In addition, traitors cannot hold any office in the United States.

Japan

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[Japan](#) *per se* does not have a law of treason.^[2] Instead it has an separated offence against be involved in foreign aggression (this can be since from [invasion](#) to [espionage](#)) against the State of Japan ([Japanese](#): , [romanized](#): *gaikanzai*; literally "crime of foreign mischief").

Both Japanese and non-Japanese nationals can be equally convicted of said offence.

The [Empire of Japan](#) used to have a crime similar to the one of "high treason" in English-language countries ([Japanese](#): , [romanized](#): *taigyakuzai*). This law was abolished with the [American occupation](#) of the country after [World War II](#).^[3]

References

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1. ↑ "[Treason and other Offences against the Queen's Authority and Person](#)". Department of Justice Canada. Retrieved 17 November 2012.
2. ↑ "[Penal Code \(Act No. 45 of 1907\)](#)" (PDF). *Penal Code of Japan*: 1–5. June 12, 2007.
3. ↑ Palmowski, Jan (2016). *[A Dictionary of Contemporary World History](#)*. Oxford University Press. [ISBN 9780199295678](#).

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