

**CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR DRUG OFFENDERS IN MALAYSIA:
BALANCING BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND UTILITARIAN
RATIONALES**

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Bachelor in Legal Studies (Hons)

**Universiti Teknologi MARA
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October 2009

The students/authors confirm that the work submitted is their own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our supervisor Profesor Emeritus Shad Salem Faruqi for his advice and support throughout this project. This project would not have been able to accomplish on time if it had not been for his support. His assistance and guidance was also invaluable.

Credits also been given to our parents and family members for giving us moral and financial support throughout this project. Special thanks dedicated to our friends for their kindness and willingness to share their additional information which is very much relevant for the project paper.

In addition, we would like to express our gratitude to Encik Hafizi, the Enforcement Officer of National Anti-Drugs Agency (AADK) and Lance Corporal 118665 MOHD NASIR MOHD SHARIR for the full cooperation and time that had been sacrificed during the interview and for the completion of this project. The information we gained were very valuable and crucial for our project paper.

Last but not least, we also wish to thank many people who gave their full support either directly or indirectly to the project and during the thesis writing. This includes each member in our group; Aizuddin, Azman, Nurmifatul Shuhadah and Siti Aisyah for the effort and hard work that had been put in making this project paper a success. Once again, thank you very much.

ABSTRACT

Many countries in Asia, including Malaysia, impose the death penalty for non-violent crimes, including drug related crimes. Capital punishment is irrevocable and can be inflicted on the innocent. It has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishments. Every death sentence is an affront to human dignity, every execution a symptom of, not a solution to, a culture of violence. However, the government holds a different view. It reserves the death penalty for those who carry, say, above fifteen grammes of heroin because of the harm that they would have had on the populace, if the drug had been disseminated. This reservation strengthens the government's stand on the import of dangerous quantities of drugs. It is a message to the drug offenders, who would always attempt to maximise their profits by carrying more drugs on each trip, not to entertain such ideas. It is prevention within deterrence, minimising the damage. It is a sort of damage control.

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