



### **3rd SCH: Capital Punishment**

#### **I. Background**

Capital punishment, also referred to as the death penalty, is typically a government sanctioned practice in which a person is put to death or executed. Depending on the area and state, the government may allow the citizens to decide whether they practice capital punishment or not. Capital punishment has long been a part of history, and extends far back to the first dynasties in China. Some modern methods of execution include lethal injection, lethal gas, electrocution, firing squad, and hanging. Capital punishment is slowly being outlawed, however many countries still practice it. Capital punishment is a controversial topic, as it is sometimes believed to infringe on human rights and to violate many ethical and moral laws. However, others claim it decreases crime rates, promotes good behavior, and ensures the safety of citizens. Many laws and protocols, such as those by the United Nations, have restricted capital punishment, limiting some countries to only allow it during periods of conflict.

#### **II. UN Involvement**

The UN has committees such as International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that have campaigns advocating the abolition of capital punishment. The UN Secretary General also urges countries to ban capital punishment. A moratorium has been put in place which restricts the crimes that would warrant capital punishment and who can be given the death sentence. This includes people who are younger than eighteen, pregnant women, and those with intellectual disabilities. An annual General Assembly resolution is called together, mostly led by EU countries, in order to encourage other countries to abolish capital punishment. There are approximately forty countries that consistently vote against the resolution even to this day. Starting in 2005, many countries have begun to ban the death penalty, deciding that it is dehumanizing, morally corrupt, and a violation of justice.

#### **III. Possible Solutions**

Due to the varying opinions and the controversy surrounding this topic it is important to note your country's position, and be able to defend your reasoning. If your country has abolished capital punishment entirely then consider ethical codes and human rights violations. If your country practices capital punishment or is a retentionist, understand the laws in place in your country and defend your position in your solutions. There are also other alternatives to the death penalty, such as life in prison. You can adjust harsh execution methods if your country has any, or adjust sentencing guidelines.

#### **IV. Country Bloc Positions**

African: Along the southern African coastline some countries have abolished capital punishment, and while many others have not executed anyone in a long period of time, most of the African countries still have capital punishment.

Western: In Northern America, only the United States still has the death penalty, although this is only in thirty-eight states. In Latin and South America most countries have banned the death penalty, although some still practice capital punishment and others have only outlawed it in ordinary crimes.



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Asia/Pacific: Much of the Asian countries still have the death penalty in place, along with some Pacific islands such as Indonesia and Malaysia. Many other Pacific islands such as Samoa and the Philippines have abolished the death penalty.

Europe: Most European countries have abolished capital punishment and openly fight against the practice, although Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan still have capital punishment.

Middle East: Most of the Middle Eastern areas still allow capital punishment, regardless of the crime committed. The majority of the countries in this area have executed many people.

### **V. Questions to Consider**

1. Are your country's methods of execution inhumane, cruel or unusual?
2. Is capital punishment cultural based or law based?
3. Do a majority of your citizens feel capital punishment as morally acceptable?

### **VI. Works Cited**

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