



## The Death Penalty: a 'Just' end?

Hello, my name is Jessica Egert and I will be chairing the human rights committee along with Euan Cram-Mitchell at North Berwick High School's MUN. This is my first time chairing however I have attended several conferences in the past year. If this is your first time at MUN please don't be afraid to speak up and ask for points of information as it is definitely a more enjoyable experience that way. This briefing paper should help delegates in preparation for debate on the death penalty. If all delegates could please email their position papers regarding the death penalty to [nbjeger11@edubuzz.org](mailto:nbjeger11@edubuzz.org)

## Background Information

Capital punishment is a government authorised penalty in many countries whereby an individual is killed as punishment for a crime they have committed. Over 60% of the global population currently live in a country where executions as punishment are legalised. 36 countries actively practise capital punishment today. The use of the death penalty has risen significantly as figures show an increase of 50% in the last 2 years; this shows the prevalence of capital punishment in societies worldwide. Methods of capital punishment vary depending on the specific country. However, popular methods include lethal injection, electrocution, lethal gas, firing squad, and hanging.

Supporters of the death penalty believe that its use will deter others from committing serious offences and enables the government to retain order in their country. It also shows that the judicial system has no sympathy for those breaking the law and it provides a solution for the problem of overpopulation in prisons. On the other hand, many believe that capital punishment is morally wrong and it cannot be guaranteed that innocent lives will not be lost. The question that the United Nations faces is whether or not capital punishment should be abolished worldwide and what methods could be used to replace it.

Some points to consider:

- Are human rights affected once an individual is sentenced to the death penalty?
- Whether or not the death penalty is the most effective punishment.
- Are there any alternative punishments that could replace the death penalty?
- If your country does not have the death penalty in place, should it be reinstated and would this be efficient in reducing your country's crime rate?

## Useful links

<https://death.rdsecure.org/section.php?id=13>

<http://deathpenalty.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=002000>

<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/mar/29/death-penalty-countries-world>

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0777460.html>