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UACE S101 General Paper section A: Capital punishment in Uganda

Capital punishment, which is also known as the death penalty, is criminal punishment that takes the defendant's life as the punishment for the defendant's crime. The sentence ordering capital punishment is called the death sentence, and the act of carrying out the sentence is called an execution. A defendant sentenced to death and waiting for execution is said to be on death row.

In the common law system, capital punishment is only used in a limited number of crimes such as treason, murder, rape, and arson and may be executed through firing squad, electrocution or lethal drugs.

Arguments for capital punishment

Both as a deterrent and as a form of permanent incapacitation, the death penalty helps to prevent future crime even though it is not proven to be deterrent.

Retribution is one the reason people that support capital punishment advance. People that advance this argument believe that real justice requires people to suffer for their wrongdoing, and to suffer in a way appropriate for the crime. Each criminal should get what their crime deserves and in the case of a murderer what their crime deserves is death. It's often supported with the argument "An eye for an eye".

Deterrence is another reason advanced by people that support capital punishment. Capital punishment is often justified with the argument that by executing convicted murderers, we will deter would-be murderers from killing people. However, this would have been effective when the punishment happens soon after the crime but the lengthy court processes distance the crime from the punishment making it less effective.

Capital punishment promotes respect to the lives of the less privileged, the poor, children, women and those who are politically weak from being taken advantage of by the rich and those in position of authority.

Capital punishment helps strengthens the power of Government to fight against crime such as terrorism, kidnapping, aggravated murder, treason, robbery and others.

It is urged that it is cheaper and easier to kill the criminal than to feed the criminal for life or leave the criminal to cause unrest to the society through atrocities.

Prevention of re-offending is another reason to support criminal punishment because those who are executed cannot commit further crimes.

It is an incentive to help police eradicate crime because the criminal is forced provides information to the police that would be used curb further crimes in exchange to reduced punishment.

It also saves the criminal from suffering a lot from life imprisonment.

Capital punishment assures the community that the state is concerned about the citizen's security and reaffirms social values that are violated in society.

Arguments against capital punishment

Capital punishment is irreversible and final, so innocent persons may be put to death since it is very hard to prove that the person sentenced 100% committed the crime. It is impossible to bring back to life a person executed and later found innocent.

The punishment does not give a chance to the convict to reform against the aims of punishments.

Capital punishment in form of public execution and firing squad may traumatize children who may lose respect for human life.

Capital punishment may be a way of torturing the poor than the rich because the poor cannot afford the higher legal costs such as hiring expensive lawyers to avert the punishment.

Some people argue that 'two wrongs do not make a right'; killing someone who has killed another does not restore the life of the first one. Thus this is just a double loss to the country.

The death penalty is immoral and amounts to torture and therefore is opposed by many religions from Catholicism to Judaism. These call for its worldwide abolition.

Sometimes people are unjustly put death due to political influence especially the opposition thus capital punishment should be abolished.

It does not respect human dignity, it tortures and therefore it is brutal.

Thank you

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