

## **DPM: Abolish mandatory death penalty to focus on prevention**

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The government is abolishing the mandatory death penalty for drug offences to focus on prevention, said Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

However, he did not respond to the question on whether the mandatory death penalty would also be removed for other offences.

“We are in midst of amending our prevention measures and the Dangerous Drugs Act. I think we need to look into not just the legal aspects, but also the human face of the government.

“In that regard, many countries have changed their system of penalties away from hanging-onto-death for drug dealers.

“Malaysia will follow suit because what we need to focus on is prevention and rehabilitation,” Zahid said when asked at a press conference today.

He said this is especially important, since there will be a supply for drugs as long as there is demand.

Yesterday, de facto Law Minister Nancy Shukri said she hoped the government will be able to table the amendment to Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 in Parliament next March to abolish the mandatory death sentence for drug-related offences.

This would allow judges to use their discretion whether or not to impose the death sentence.

"God willing, I hope the attorney-general (Mohamed Apandi Ali) can do it fast," she had said.

In Malaysia, death sentences are imposed for the offences of murder, firearms, treason and drug trafficking.

In a parliamentary written reply dated Nov 3, Nancy said there are 1,022 inmates on death row in prison.

The sentences could not be carried out as the inmates are appealing against their convictions.

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