

First reading today of bill to end mandatory death penalty

By Nor Ain Mohamed Radhi, Teh Athira Yusof, Qisfina Sallehuddin - March 27, 2023 @ 12:35pm

KUALA LUMPUR: The first reading of the Abolishment of the Mandatory Death Penalty Bill 2023 and Review of the Death Penalty and Lifelong Imprisonment (Federal Court Temporary Jurisdiction) 2023 will be done in the Dewan Rakyat today.

The bill is expected to be tabled by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said.

Azalina said the second reading of the Bill will be done in the current Parliament sitting.

The second reading will also include other Bill amendments that Azalina tabled today for the first reading which were the Sexual Offences Against Children and Evidence of Child Witness.

The Pengerang Member of Parliament previously said, the mandatory death sentence would be abolished for offences which did not cause death, except for three offences namely Sections 212 and 121A of the Penal Code, as well as Section 39B of the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952.

She said a new Bill would also be introduced to enable death sentences of lifelong imprisonment already imposed by courts to be reviewed by the Federal Court.



Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said. - NSTP/ASYRAF HAMZAH

On March 23, Azalina said the Cabinet had agreed to several new policies in a bid to abolish the mandatory death penalty.

She said the policies include no more lifelong imprisonment as an alternative to the mandatory death penalty.

The proposed alternative, she said, was a jail term of no less than 30 years and not exceeding 40 years, as well as no less than 12 strokes of the rotan.

The Abolishment of the Mandatory Death Penalty Bill 2023 is expected to impact 476 people on death row who have yet to exhaust the appeal process, whether in the Court of Appeal or Federal Court.

The proposal to abolish the mandatory death penalty was first agreed upon in June last year.