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The Relevance of the Death Penalty for Drug Dealers as an Extraordinary Crime in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT; *Narcotics crimes are categorized as extraordinary crimes due to their extensive impact on public health, social stability, and national resilience. Within the structure of illicit drug trafficking, drug kingpins occupy a central position as network controllers and primary beneficiaries of illegal profits. Indonesian positive law, partyculary Law Number 35 of 2009on Narcotics, still provides for the death penalty for certain narcotics offenses. This study aims to analyze the regulation of the death penalty for drug kingpins under Indonesian law, examine its relevance from criminological and human rights perspectives, and formulate proportional criteria for its application. This research employs a normative juridical method with statutory and conceptual approaches, analyzed qualitatively. The finfings indicate that, from a criminological perspective, drug kingpins are principal actors in organized crime who act rationally and are profit oriented, thereby possessing a higher degree of culpability and social harm compared to users, who are generally victims of addiction. From a human rights standpoint, the death penalty may still be justified in a limited manner, provided that it complies with the principle of the most serious crimes, proportionality, and guarantees of due process of law. Therefore, the death penalty remains relevant as an ultimum remedium for large-scale drug kingpins, subject to strict and selective criteria in order to balance public protection and respect for human rights.*

Keywords: *Death Penalty; Drug Kingpins; Narcotics Crime; Criminology; Human Rights; Ultimum Remedium; Indonesian Narcotics Law.*

INTRODUCTION

Drug crimes are extraordinary crimes with far-reaching impacts on public health, social stability, and national security. Within the structure of drug crime, drug dealers play a central role in controlling the production and distribution of illicit drug trafficking networks. Therefore, Indonesian law, Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics, stipulates the death penalty for certain perpetrators proven to be large-scale drug dealers or distributors. However, the application of the death penalty to drug dealers remains controversial, particularly from a human rights perspective, which guarantees the right to life. On the other hand, a criminological approach views drug dealers as rational actors in organized crime that causes widespread social harm. Based on this, it is important to analyze the relevance of the death penalty to drug dealers from a human rights and criminological perspective in Indonesia.

Illicit drug trafficking is a phenomenon that threatens the security and well-being of Indonesian society. This phenomenon is no longer merely a local crime but has evolved into a disturbing transnational organized crime. Illicit drug trafficking not only impacts the national level but also has significant international implications. On a broader scale, this poses a serious threat to national defense.[1] Illicit drug trafficking has become a highly concerning phenomenon for the global community, including Indonesia. This phenomenon has transcended national borders and is no longer confined to specific geographic regions. Furthermore, illicit drug trafficking encompasses more than just local criminal activity but has evolved into transnational organized crime.

Drug crimes have reached 13,000 cases, with the majority being abuse (41%) and distribution (40.5%). According to the Head of the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), Commissioner General Marthinus Hukom, adolescents are entering a volatile age and are easily influenced by peer values. In some cases, individuals have been found to be using drugs for the first time due to curiosity or encouragement from friends. The age group most frequently reported in drug crimes as of April 2025 was the 21-30 age group, with 6,168 reported cases. Meanwhile, 1,153 reported cases were under 20. At the beginning of the year, there were 3,951 drug crimes in Indonesia, which then rose to 4,170 cases the following month. The number of cases declined in March 2025. As of April 17, 2025, the number of drug crimes that month reached 1,359.[2]

Drug trafficking, carried out using sophisticated techniques, has spread throughout Indonesia. It can be said that there has been a shift in the syndicates' methods, where psychotropic drugs are no longer imported but rather dealers prefer to establish their own factories. The procurement of raw materials, compounding, and even the recruitment of personnel involved in drug production are meticulously planned.[3] Initially a transit country for drug trafficking, Indonesia has now become a destination for international drug networks.

A drug dealer can be defined as someone who secretly controls or finances a drug crime. In practice, a drug dealer includes the mastermind behind drug smuggling, drug conspiracy, and so on. The definition of drug trafficking itself encompasses any activity or series of activities involving the distribution or delivery of narcotics, whether for trade, non-trade, or transfer, for the benefit of health services and the development of science and technology.[4]

In the provisions of the Narcotics Law, "distributors" are regulated in articles 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125. Basically, "distributors" are categorized as perpetrators (daders). In the Narcotics Law, "distributors" are threatened with the death penalty, imprisonment, and fines. Viewed from a criminal aspect, it is clear that drug distribution is a crime that will certainly have legal consequences as stated in Article 114 paragraphs 1 and 2 of Law No. 35 of 2009

[1] Abstrak Peredaran et al., "No Title" 9, no. 4 (2024).
[2] SILMI HAKIKI, "Jumlah Kejahatan Narkoba Tembus 13 Ribu Kasus per April 2025", GoodStats, 20 Juli 2025, di akses pada tanggal 18 Februari 2026
[3] Jurnal Daulat Hukum, "No Title" 1, no. 1 (2018): 201–10.
[4] "1 , 2 , 3" 6, no. 1 (2024): 35–46.

concerning Narcotics. From a human rights aspect, drug dealers can be said to have damaged the younger generation because with drugs, the human rights of the younger generation will be taken away. To date, no drug has had a positive impact on its users, other than for medical purposes under medical supervision.[5]

The debate over the application of the death penalty to drug dealers has always been at the intersection of human rights protection and public protection. From a human rights perspective, the death penalty is considered a violation of the right to life guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and carries the potential risk of irreparable wrongful execution. Conversely, from a public protection perspective, the state has a constitutional obligation to protect citizens from extraordinary crimes such as drug trafficking, which damage generations and national security; therefore, the death penalty for drug dealers is considered the ultimum remedium for deterrence and prevention. This debate highlights the tension between the principle of non-derogable rights and the doctrine of public interest, requiring criminal policy to consider proportionality, legal certainty, and the effectiveness of drug countermeasures without neglecting international human rights standards.

In drug law policy, it is important to clearly distinguish between drug dealers and users, as their status and the impact of their actions are fundamentally different. Drug dealers are the main actors in the illicit trafficking chain, consciously organizing the production, distribution, and profiting from drug crimes, thus qualifying them as serious criminals with the threat of severe penalties. Conversely, users are generally victims of dependency, requiring medical and psychological health and rehabilitation approaches, as outlined in Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics. Therefore, equating drug dealers with users is not only legally flawed but also criminologically counterproductive, as it obscures the focus of law enforcement on drug trafficking actors and hinders the recovery of drug abuse victims.

PROBLEM

How is the death penalty regulated for drug dealers under Indonesian law?

How is the death penalty relevant for drug dealers from a human rights and criminology perspective?

What are the criteria for proportionally applying the death penalty to drug dealers to ensure it aligns with human rights principles and community protection?

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a normative juridical legal approach, focusing on the analysis of positive legal norms, principles, and legal concepts related to criminal liability for drug traffickers. This approach was chosen because the research aims to examine the legal regulations and justification for sentencing drug dealers as the primary perpetrators of drug crimes. The approaches employed include a statutory and conceptual approach. The statutory approach examines positive legal provisions governing drug crimes and their criminal system, particularly Law Number 35 of

[5] Lex Crimen, "Lex Crimen" II, no. 4 (2013): 63–71.

2009 concerning Narcotics and the Criminal Code as the national criminal law framework. Meanwhile, the conceptual approach is used to analyze the concept of criminal liability for drug dealers, theories of punishment, and criminological and human rights perspectives in drug crime prevention policies. The legal sources used consist of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include narcotics legislation and national criminal law. Secondary legal materials include criminal law literature, human rights doctrine, and criminological theories relevant to the characteristics of drug traffickers. Tertiary legal materials include legal dictionaries that support understanding of legal terms. The legal materials were collected through literature review, inventorying, classifying, and reviewing legal materials relevant to the research problem. The legal materials were analyzed qualitatively and normatively, using legal interpretation and juridical argumentation methods to assess the appropriateness of the regulations and concepts of punishment for drug dealers from the perspective of community protection, human rights, and criminological theory.

This research will use two theories as analytical tools:

1. Differential Association Theory (Criminal Networks)

Edwin Sutherland's Differential Association Theory (1947) states that criminal behavior is learned through social interactions within an environment or group that has previously accepted criminal values and techniques as normal.[6] In the context of drug trafficking, a person's involvement as a dealer does not emerge spontaneously, but rather through a learning process within a criminal network that transmits knowledge about distribution, security, and strategies for evading law enforcement.

2. Conflict Theory

Karl Marx's Conflict Theory states that social change does not occur through a process of adjusting values that brings about change, but rather occurs as a result of conflict that produces compromises that differ from the original conditions. This theory is based on the ownership of the means of production as a fundamental element of class division in society.[7] Conflict theory views crime as a result of power relations and social inequality in society, where groups with greater resources and economic control tend to dominate and exploit weaker groups, as influenced by the thinking of Karl Marx. In the context of narcotics, organized illegal businesses reflect this relationship, where dealers and distribution networks dominate production, distribution, and profits. Users, on the other hand, are subordinated as a market exploited through dependency. Thus, drug trafficking can be understood as a structured illegal economic practice that maintains the power and profits of a group of dealers within a criminal organization.

[6] Sondang Zefanya, Febee Asima, and Untung Sumarwan, "Penyalahgunaan Dan Pengedaran Narkotika Di Kelurahan Johar Baru : Tinjauan Dari Teori Differential Association" 7, no. 5 (2025): 3875–86.
[7] Ibnu Khaldun et al., "Teori Konflik Sosiologi Klasik Dan Modern," 2017, 32–48.

DISCUSSION

Regulation of the Death Penalty for Narcotics in Indonesia

Narcotics crimes are classified as extraordinary crimes because they pose serious threats to public health, social order, and national resilience. In response to the increasing scale and complexity of narcotics trafficking, Indonesian law imposes severe criminal sanctions, including the death penalty, for certain narcotics offenses. The legal basis for the imposition of capital punishment is regulated in Law Number 35 of 2009 on Narcotics, particularly under Articles 113, 114, 116, 118, 119, 121, and 133. These provisions demonstrate the state's firm policy in combating narcotics crimes, especially those involving large quantities of narcotics, organized distribution networks, and acts resulting in death or permanent disability.[8]

Article 113 paragraph (2) stipulates the death penalty for perpetrators who produce, import, export, or distribute Class I narcotics exceeding the specified threshold, namely more than one kilogram or more than five plant stalks for plant-based narcotics, or more than five grams for non-plant narcotics. Likewise, Article 114 paragraph (2) imposes the death penalty on individuals involved in offering for sale, selling, purchasing, acting as intermediaries, exchanging, delivering, or receiving Class I narcotics exceeding the statutory limit. Similar provisions are also found in Articles 118 paragraph (2) and 119 paragraph (2) concerning Class II narcotics.

Furthermore, Articles 116 paragraph (2) and 121 paragraph (2) regulate the death penalty for perpetrators who use narcotics against another person or provide narcotics for another person's use when such actions result in death or permanent disability. These provisions emphasize the seriousness of narcotics offenses that directly endanger human life and bodily integrity. In addition, Article 133 paragraph (1) provides capital punishment for any person who persuades, orders, threatens, deceives, or otherwise involves minors in narcotics-related crimes. The inclusion of children in narcotics networks is considered an aggravating circumstance because it threatens the future generation and expands the social harm caused by narcotics trafficking.

Although Law Number 35 of 2009 on Narcotics clearly provides the death penalty as a criminal sanction, the law does not specifically regulate the time frame or mechanism for carrying out executions against narcotics convicts sentenced to death. The absence of explicit provisions regarding the implementation of executions has created legal uncertainty and resulted in many death row inmates remaining unexecuted for prolonged periods. This condition has generated ongoing debates concerning legal certainty, the effectiveness of the death penalty as a deterrent, and the protection of human rights within the Indonesian criminal justice system.[9]

Fundamental changes in the regulation of the death penalty in Indonesia occurred following the enactment of Law Number 1 of 2023 concerning the Criminal Code, a reform of national criminal law that aligns the sentencing system with constitutional values, human rights developments, and social dynamics. One of the key changes in the

[8] Pelaksanaan Eksekusi et al., "L a w r e v i e W" 3, no. 2 (2020).
[9] Eksekusi et al.

new Criminal Code is the restructuring of the types and status of the death penalty, which is no longer considered a primary punishment as in the old Criminal Code.

Article 67 of the new Criminal Code explicitly stipulates that the death penalty is a special punishment and is always threatened as an alternative. This means that the death penalty no longer stands alone as the sole penalty but is always paired with other punishments, such as life imprisonment or a fixed term of imprisonment.

This regulation reflects a shift in the sentencing paradigm within the Indonesian criminal law system. The death penalty is no longer understood as a primary punishment that can be imposed directly, but rather as an exceptional sanction that can only be applied under certain, very limited circumstances. This offering is in line with the views of criminal law experts who emphasize that the death penalty should be placed as an extraordinary instrument in dealing with crimes that are also extraordinary in nature (extraordinary crimes), not as part of the usual criminal practice.[10]

In this context, narcotics are classified as extraordinary crimes, and the state faces a significant challenge: how to create criminal law that is not only repressive but also preventive and corrective.[11] Narcotics crimes are classified as extraordinary crimes because they have broad, organized impacts that undermine various aspects of society, from public health and social stability to the resilience of the nation's future generations.

Within the structure of illicit drug trafficking, dealers occupy a central position as controllers of distribution, providers of supply, and those who profit economically from exploiting users' dependency. This strategic role makes them actors who directly expand the reach of drug trafficking and the number of victims in society. Unlike users, who are downstream and often become victims of dependency, dealers consciously and rationally maintain criminal networks for profit, thus creating greater and systemic social risks. Therefore, drug dealers can be considered a real threat to public protection and public order, which criminologically and legally justifies the implementation of more repressive criminal policies than those for users.

Criminological Perspective on Drug Dealers

According to Differential Association theory, deviant behavior can be learned through social interactions with those who have previously engaged in such behavior. In this study, Edwin Sutherland's Differential Association theory is used to explain how a person's involvement as a drug dealer is formed through a social learning process within an organized illicit trafficking network.[12] Through intense interaction with other actors in the network, individuals learn distribution techniques, communication patterns, security mechanisms, and even the rationalization that drug trafficking is a justifiable economic activity.

[10] Magister Hukum et al., “1* , 2” 2, no. 7 (2023): 9314–24.
[11] Christian Felix Lumbanraja, “Politik Hukum Pidana Dalam Penanggulangan Kejahatan Narkotika Di Indonesia” 1, no. 1 (n.d.).
[12] Zefanya, Asima, and Sumarwan, “Penyalahgunaan Dan Pengedaran Narkotika Di Kelurahan Johar Baru : Tinjauan Dari Teori Differential Association.”

This repeated association process instills criminal values and norms that reinforce the dealer's role as a key actor in the structure of drug crime. Therefore, in the context of this study, Differential Association theory emphasizes that dealers are not simply individual offenders, but rather actors formed and functioning within an organized criminal network, thus carrying a heavier criminal liability than users who are downstream and not integrated into the criminal structure.

According to Karl Marx's conflict theory, social change does not occur through a process of adjusting values that brings about change, but rather occurs through conflict that produces compromises that differ from the original conditions. This theory is based on the ownership of the means of production as a fundamental element of class division in society.[13] In this study, conflict theory is used to explain that drug trafficking is a form of organized illegal business born of power relations and economic interests within society, as influenced by Karl Marx. Drug dealers and distribution networks occupy dominant positions, controlling supply, prices, and distribution areas, and accumulating profits from users' dependence on them as a market.

The hierarchical structure and division of roles within these networks indicate that drug trafficking operates like an illegal economic organization maintaining its group's power and profits. Thus, conflict theory asserts that drug dealers are the primary actors in organized illegal businesses that exploit social vulnerabilities, thus criminologically and legally viewed as a greater threat to society than users. From a criminological and criminal policy perspective, drug dealers and users occupy fundamentally different positions. Drug dealers act as rational actors who consciously choose to engage in drug trafficking with an orientation toward economic gain, controlling distribution, and maintaining distribution networks to accumulate illegal profits.

In contrast, users are generally in the position of victims of dependence who are medically and psychologically addicted, so it is more appropriate to view them as those in need of health intervention and rehabilitation. This difference in character emphasizes the differentiation of levels of culpability and social harm: Drug dealers create and expand the drug market, while users are the ones impacted by that system. Therefore, criminologically and legally, it can be concluded that drug dealers, as rational, profit-oriented actors, deserve greater accountability and criminal sanctions than users, as victims.

Death Penalty for Drug Dealers from a Human Rights Perspective

The imposition of the death penalty has generated various controversies. Based on the human rights concept, the right to life is a non-derogable right. International instruments support the right to life, as stated in the Declaration of Human Rights and the ICCPR. Similarly, Article 28A of the 1945 Constitution affirms that everyone has the right to life and the right to defend their life and livelihood. Article 28I states that the right to life is a basic right that cannot be diminished under any circumstances. Article 28I requires individuals to respect the right to life.

However, Article 28J states that everyone is obliged to respect the human rights of others and must comply with restrictions established by law to guarantee recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others. This article stipulates

[13] Khaldun et al., "Teori Konflik Sosiologi Klasik Dan Modern."

accountability for those who violate human rights, and the Indonesian criminal law system still applies the death penalty.[14]

According to Aristotle's theory of justice, distributive justice demands that everyone receive their due, thus being proportional. The assessment here is that everyone receives their due in a proportional manner. In light of this research, the nation, especially the younger generation, has the right to proportional justice, including protection by the state to avoid the harmful effects of illicit drug trafficking. Therefore, the state, through the Public Prosecutor, in order to prevent and eradicate illicit drug trafficking, for the sake of justice for the nation, and especially for victims, deserves the death penalty in sentencing proceedings. Justice for the younger generation and victims is an absolute human right that must be accommodated by the state through legal instruments and the imposition of the death penalty.[15]

Article 28J of the 1945 Constitution states that, in consideration of the greater good, a person's right to life is subject to limitations. Therefore, although everyone has the right to life, this right is not absolute. This right is limited by the imposition of the death penalty as long as it is implemented in accordance with applicable norms and values. It can also be said that the implementation of the death penalty is in line with and guaranteed by the basic law of the constitution. This limitation is intended to guarantee recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others, to fulfill the demands of justice based on moral considerations, religious values, security, and public order. Therefore, the researcher firmly believes that the right to life as stipulated in Article 28A of the 1945 Constitution is understood to mean that every person's life may not be taken arbitrarily, and that arbitrary deprivation of the right to life is prohibited.

The researcher's opinion above is in line with the international agreement in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which in Article 6 paragraph (1) states that: "Every human being has the right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life." This means that everyone has the right to life. No one can be arbitrarily deprived of their life. However, Article 6 paragraph (2) of the ICCPR also explains this, stating:

"In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, the death penalty may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This penalty can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgment rendered by a competent court."

The above provision essentially states that for countries that have not abolished the use of the death penalty, the death penalty may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time the crime was committed and not contrary to the provisions of this Covenant and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.[16] Consequently, this statement is identical to the provisions of Article 28J of the 1945 Constitution, as previously explained.

From the formulation above, it can be concluded that the imposition of the death penalty on perpetrators of illicit drug trafficking does not conflict with the Human

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[14] Warih Anjari, "Penjatuhan Pidana Mati Di Indonesia Dalam" 1 (2015).

[15] Syahfira Adellia Putri, "Tuntutan Pidana Mati Terhadap Pelaku Peredaran Gelap Narkotika" 5 (n.d.): 191–210, https://doi.org/10.28946/lexl.v6i2.3174.

[16] Putri, ibid

Rights Law. In other words, the human rights adopted by the Indonesian people do recognize the limitations as referred to in the Human Rights Law, and the 1945 Constitution, especially Article 28J. This means that the threat of the death penalty in the Narcotics Law can be said to have a valid constitutional basis. Thus, the application of the death penalty in the world is a reality that cannot be forced to be eliminated, not a violation of human rights, because its application is limited specifically to very serious crimes. Similarly, Oemar Seno Adji, has the view and principle of agreeing with the implementation of the death penalty for perpetrators of violent or very serious crimes, such as corruption, narcotics, and terrorism, which have clearly had a very negative impact on human civilization.[17]

Criteria and Relevance of the Death Penalty for Drug Dealers in Indonesia

The ongoing smuggling of narcotics into Indonesia from abroad by international syndicates demonstrates that Indonesia is a potential market for the marketing of these illicit goods.[18] The increasing number of drug users has become a lure for international syndicates seeking to reap substantial profits from this illicit business. This means that drug abuse in Indonesia is a serious concern and could threaten the future of this nation, as some students, as the nation's next generation, are increasingly vulnerable due to drug abuse. A young generation whose physical and psychological well-being is damaged as a result of drug abuse cannot be expected to think clearly and contribute to national development.

The death penalty for drug dealers in Indonesia can be seen as relevant within the framework of community protection and extraordinary drug crime prevention policies. From a deterrent perspective, the maximum penalty is intended to create a strong deterrent effect on both perpetrators and potential perpetrators, given that drug trafficking is a rational, profit-driven crime. From a public protection perspective, eliminating the main actors in trafficking is seen as an effort to disrupt distribution networks and prevent the spread of addiction within the community. Meanwhile, within the framework of social justice, the death penalty is positioned as the most severe form of accountability for perpetrators who knowingly profit from damage to the health, social well-being, and future of the nation's future generations.

Considering the significant social impact of drug trafficking and the position of major drug dealers as network controllers and primary profit earners, the death penalty remains relevant within the Indonesian criminal law system. This sanction is positioned as a last resort (ultimum remidium) for large-scale traffickers who cause widespread harm to society. Therefore, criminologically and legally, major drug dealers still deserve the harshest penalties as long as their application is selective, proportional, and ensures the protection of human rights.

The imposition of the death penalty on drug traffickers must be based on strict criteria to ensure proportionate and align with human rights principles and the goal of public protection. First, the criteria relate to position and scale of role within the network. The death penalty is only relevant for major traffickers proven to control or finance an organized drug trafficking network, whether nationally or internationally. This limitation is important to distinguish between primary controllers and lower-level actors, such as couriers or middlemen, to avoid generalizing the maximum sentence

[17] Ibid.

[18] D I Perbatasan Indonesia, "Jurnal Impresi Indonesia (JII)" 2, no. 4 (2023): 393–406, https://doi.org/10.58344/jii.v2i4.2344.

imposed on all perpetrators.

Second, the criteria for impact and the level of social harm caused. Traffickers whose actions are proven to cause significant volumes of trafficking, reach a wide area, and have the potential to cause mass casualties can be categorized as high-risk criminals. In this context, the death penalty can only be considered if their actions meet the standards for the most serious crimes recognized in international human rights discourse.

Third, the criteria for intent and profit-oriented behavior. Drug traffickers generally act consciously, deliberately, and are oriented toward economic gain. These elements of rationality and profit motive reinforce a higher level of culpability compared to users in a state of dependence. Therefore, proving malicious intent, planning, and profit are crucial aspects in assessing the proportionality of the maximum penalty.

Fourth, the criteria for ensuring a fair trial and the precautionary principle. Given that the death penalty concerns the right to life as a fundamental right, the law enforcement process must ensure due process of law, strong evidence, and be free from procedural violations. Without meeting strict judicial standards, the application of the death penalty has the potential to conflict with human rights principles. Based on these four criteria, the death penalty for drug dealers can be positioned as an ultimum remedium, applied selectively and limitedly, thus maintaining a balance between protecting society from drug crimes and respecting human rights principles.

CONCLUSION

Indonesian law still stipulates the death penalty as a sanction for drug traffickers, particularly drug dealers, who are the main actors in organized crime networks that control distribution and profit from illegal trafficking. From a human rights perspective, the application of the death penalty to drug dealers can still be justified in a limited manner within the framework of the most serious crimes, provided that the principles of prudence and fair trial are met. Therefore, the death penalty for drug dealers in Indonesia remains relevant as an instrument for protecting society from the widespread impacts of drug crime.

The application of the death penalty in drug cases should be limited to large-scale dealers proven to control distribution networks and cause widespread impacts, while users must be prioritized through a rehabilitation approach. Furthermore, clear legal criteria for drug dealer categories are needed in legislation to avoid disparities in sentencing. Eradication efforts also need to focus on structurally disrupting drug crime networks by strengthening law enforcement against drug trafficking organizations, not solely targeting lower-level perpetrators.

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