

Capital punishment

Capital punishment, death penalty or execution, is punishment by death. The sentence that someone be punished in this manner is a death sentence. Crimes that can result in a death penalty are known as capital crimes or capital offences. The term capital originates from the Latin capitalis, literally "regarding the head" (referring to execution by beheading). Capital punishment has, in the past, been practiced by most societies, as a punishment for criminal, and political or religious dissidents. Historically, the carrying out of the death sentence was often accompanied by torture and executions were most often public.

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