



# THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

LEFT

CRIMINALS DESERVE A SECOND CHANCE

Singapore's Yellow Ribbon Project seeks to raise awareness of the problems ex-convicts face in re-entering society. The softer approach modelled after the left-wing notion that criminals are victims of their social and economic circumstances attempts to promote acceptance of these individuals in society and garner community action to support the reintegration of criminals.

The Project highlights how ex-offenders have to live with the stigma of having served time behind bars when they are released from prison. Many ex-offenders, once released, find themselves literally stepping into a second prison with invisible bars when society treats them with suspicion, distrust and discrimination. This could then start the vicious cycle of ex-offenders turning to a life of crime once again if not given a chance to start their lives anew.

The initiative to reduce the recidivism rate by shifting away from "lock-and-key" detention has been cited as a good practice model and has been adapted by Fiji's Prisons and Correctional Service. The philosophy of restoration and rehabilitation is increasingly being embraced by the international community and the YRP is indicative of Singapore's attempt to provide an alternative to the justice system of punishment and deterrence.

RIGHT

CRIMINALS DESERVE HARSH PUNISHMENT

Singapore imposes the death penalty for a range of serious crimes such as drug trafficking and murder. Amidst harsh international criticisms, the government has always stood firm and argued that capital punishment works as an effective deterrent and ensures the safety and security of the nation.

In a 2007, rebuttal of an Amnesty International report criticising its death penalty system, the Singapore government stated that it sends a strong signal to would-be offenders and deters them from committing crimes such as murder and offences involving firearms, which would severely compromise the safety and security of Singapore. In the case of drug trafficking, the death penalty has deterred major drug syndicates from establishing themselves in Singapore.

The Singapore Government makes no apology for its tough law and order system. As proof of its success, Singapore is widely acknowledged to be one of the safest places in the world to live and work in.

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**HOW MAY WE BALANCE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND HUMANE PUNISHMENT?**  
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Laura Flanders' push for proportional punishment.

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