

15 OGOS 2017

Amendments to Act welcomed

Amendments to Act welcomed

I WELCOME the Cabinet's decision to amend Section 39B of the Dangerous Drugs Act (1952), which will grant judges the right to decide on a more appropriate sentence, such as jail terms, for drug traffickers instead of the mandatory death penalty.

It is a step in the right direction which is eagerly awaited as judges can truly dispense justice.

Judges must be allowed to use their fair judgment and given the discretionary

powers to dispense justice.

They should not be given a Hobson's choice, which means that there is an absence of a real alternative, since Section 39B only provides a mandatory death penalty.

In March, I urged the government to consider reviewing the mandatory death penalty for drug trafficking and make it retrospective on pending cases.

The amendment to Section 39B is time-

ly as it could help prevent a "travesty of justice".

Judges must be given the discretion to mete out suitable sentences on a case by case basis, especially for drug mules.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said said in a written reply in Parliament a memorandum will be handed to the Cabinet for an amendment to the Act.

She said research by the International

Centre for Law and Legal Studies (I-CELLS) on the issue was presented to the Cabinet on March 1 and the Cabinet had unanimously decided the amendment to Section 39B of the Dangerous Drugs Act was necessary.

TAN SRI LEE LAM THYE
SENIOR VICE-CHAIRMAN
MALAYSIA CRIME PREVENTION
FOUNDATION (MCPF)