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## Pregnant Briton faces death penalty

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# THE ARTICLE

British human rights lawyers are fighting a battle against time to save a Briton from the death penalty in Laos. Samantha Orobator, 20, has been in a Laotian prison since August last year. She was arrested at the international airport in Laos on drugs charges. She is accused of being in possession of 680g of heroin. Ms Orobator denies any knowledge of the drugs. She claims Laotian officials have made a terrible mistake and mistook her for a drug trafficker. The court in Laos has suddenly decided Samantha's trial will be next week. If she is found guilty, she will receive the death penalty. The British government is very concerned as they now have almost no time to help Samantha with a lawyer.

Human rights campaigners are very worried about Samantha. They have questioned how she became pregnant while in prison, sparking fears she was raped. British lawyer Clive Stafford Smith said: "Nothing that happens in that prison is voluntary." The jail has a very bad reputation and many prisoners complain of shocking abuse. Mr. Smith said: "If convicted next week, Samantha would face death by firing squad. Samantha is severely distressed, and [we have] grave concerns for her health and that of her unborn child." British Foreign Minister Bill Rammell said: "The British government is opposed to the use of the death penalty in all circumstances. We have made the Laos authorities aware of this at the highest levels."

# WARM-UPS

**1. DEATH PENALTY:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about the death penalty. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*human rights / fighting against time / drugs charges / terrible mistakes / lawyers / campaigners / prisons / bad reputation / being seriously distressed / the highest levels*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. HUMAN RIGHTS:** With your partner(s), make a slogan for each of these human rights. Are these rights respected in your country? Change partners and share your ideas.

| The right to...       | Slogan | Your country |
|-----------------------|--------|--------------|
| a fair trial          |        |              |
| freedom of expression |        |              |
| education             |        |              |
| religious practice    |        |              |
| work                  |        |              |
| life                  |        |              |

**4. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT:** Students A **strongly** believe capital punishment is never acceptable; Students B **strongly** believe capital punishment should be a part of all criminal justice systems. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. TERRIBLE MISTAKES:** What are your biggest mistakes with these things? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- English
- computers
- relationships
- shopping
- money
- food
- meeting new people
- other \_\_\_\_\_

**6. CAMPAIGNER:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'campaigner'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. A British woman might be executed by the government in Laos.          | T / F |
| b. The woman was arrested on suspicion of trafficking drugs.             | T / F |
| c. The woman's trial will be in a couple of months' time.                | T / F |
| d. The British government has sent a team of lawyers to see the woman.   | T / F |
| e. Activists are concerned about how the woman got pregnant.             | T / F |
| f. Prisoners in Laos volunteer to do most things while they are in jail. | T / F |
| g. The woman will be shot to death if she is found guilty.               | T / F |
| h. Britain's government refuses to talk to the Laotian government.       | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. the death penalty | a. get                |
| 2. prison            | b. conscious          |
| 3. accused of        | c. starting           |
| 4. receive           | d. capital punishment |
| 5. concerned         | e. asked              |
| 6. questioned        | f. jail               |
| 7. sparking          | g. charged with       |
| 8. reputation        | h. serious            |
| 9. grave             | i. image              |
| 10. aware            | j. worried            |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. fighting a battle                      | a. of the death penalty      |
| 2. She is accused of being in possession  | b. she became pregnant       |
| 3. Ms Orobator denies any                 | c. is very concerned         |
| 4. If she is found guilty, she will       | d. levels                    |
| 5. The British government                 | e. of 680g of heroin         |
| 6. They have questioned how               | f. reputation                |
| 7. The jail has a very bad                | g. against time              |
| 8. grave concerns for her health and that | h. receive the death penalty |
| 9. opposed to the use                     | i. knowledge of the drugs    |
| 10. at the highest                        | j. of her unborn child       |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

British human rights lawyers are fighting a \_\_\_\_\_ against time to save a Briton from the death penalty in Laos. Samantha Orobator, 20, has been in a Laotian prison \_\_\_\_\_ August last year. She was arrested at the international airport in Laos on drugs \_\_\_\_\_. She is accused of being in possession of 680g of heroin. Ms Orobator \_\_\_\_\_ any knowledge of the drugs. She claims Laotian officials have made a terrible \_\_\_\_\_ and mistook her for a drug trafficker. The court in Laos has suddenly decided Samantha's \_\_\_\_\_ will be next week. If she is found guilty, she will \_\_\_\_\_ the death penalty. The British government is very \_\_\_\_\_ as they now have almost no time to help Samantha with a lawyer.

*trial*  
*charges*  
*mistake*  
*since*  
*concerned*  
*battle*  
*denies*  
*receive*

Human rights campaigners are very \_\_\_\_\_ about Samantha. They have questioned how she became pregnant \_\_\_\_\_ in prison, sparking fears she was raped. British lawyer Clive Stafford Smith said: "Nothing that happens in that prison is \_\_\_\_\_." The jail has a very bad \_\_\_\_\_ and many prisoners complain of shocking abuse. Mr. Smith said: "If convicted next week, Samantha would \_\_\_\_\_ death by firing squad. Samantha is severely distressed, and [we have] grave \_\_\_\_\_ for her health and that of her unborn child." British Foreign Minister Bill Rammell said: "The British government is \_\_\_\_\_ to the use of the death penalty in all circumstances. We have made the Laos authorities \_\_\_\_\_ of this at the highest levels."

*concerns*  
*while*  
*reputation*  
*aware*  
*worried*  
*face*  
*voluntary*  
*opposed*

## **LISTENING:** Listen and fill in the gaps.

British human rights lawyers are fighting a battle \_\_\_\_\_ a Briton from the death penalty in Laos. Samantha Orobator, 20, has been in a Laotian prison since August last year. She was arrested at the international airport in Laos \_\_\_\_\_. She is accused of being in possession of 680g of heroin. Ms Orobator \_\_\_\_\_ of the drugs. She claims Laotian officials have made a terrible mistake and \_\_\_\_\_ drug trafficker. The court in Laos has suddenly decided Samantha's trial will be next week. If \_\_\_\_\_, she will receive the death penalty. The British government is very concerned as they now have \_\_\_\_\_ help Samantha with a lawyer.

Human rights campaigners \_\_\_\_\_ Samantha. They have questioned how she became pregnant while in prison, sparking fears she was raped. British lawyer Clive Stafford Smith said: "Nothing that happens in that \_\_\_\_\_." The jail has a very bad reputation and many prisoners complain \_\_\_\_\_. Mr. Smith said: "If convicted next week, Samantha would face death by firing squad. Samantha is severely distressed, and [we have] \_\_\_\_\_ her health and that of her unborn child." British Foreign Minister Bill Rammell said: "The British government is opposed \_\_\_\_\_ death penalty in all circumstances. We have made the Laos authorities \_\_\_\_\_ highest levels."

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**death**' and '**penalty**'.

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| <b>death</b> | <b>penalty</b> |
|              |                |

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• time</li><li>• since</li><li>• accused</li><li>• mistake</li><li>• receive</li><li>• almost</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• questioned</li><li>• while</li><li>• bad</li><li>• face</li><li>• grave</li><li>• levels</li></ul> |
|---|--|

# STUDENT DEATH PENALTY SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about the death penalty in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

|      | STUDENT 1<br>_____ | STUDENT 2<br>_____ | STUDENT 3<br>_____ |
|------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Q.1. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.2. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.3. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.4. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.5. |                    |                    |                    |

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# DEATH PENALTY DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the term 'death penalty'?
- c) What do you think about capital punishment?
- d) What do you think about the woman in the article?
- e) Do you think the British government should do more to help?
- f) Do you think Samantha will receive a fair trial?
- g) Why do you think Laos has decided to put Samantha on trial before she has a chance to get a lawyer?
- h) What do you think Laotian prisons are like?
- i) What else can the British government do to help Samantha?
- j) What would you do if you were mistakenly imprisoned

*Pregnant Briton faces death penalty – 4th May, 2009*  
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# DEATH PENALTY DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Does Samantha becoming pregnant in prison change her situation?
- c) What can we do about the world's inhumane prisons?
- d) What does "Nothing that happens in that prison is voluntary" mean?
- e) Do you know of a jail with a good reputation? What are prisons in your country like?
- f) How can we rid prisons of guards who abuse prisoners?
- g) If Laos executes Samantha, are they also murdering her unborn child?
- h) Is the death penalty state-sponsored murder?
- i) Do you think there are some situations when the death penalty is OK?
- j) What questions would you ask Laos' leader about this case?

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# LANGUAGE

British human rights lawyers are (1) \_\_\_\_ a battle against time to save a Briton from the death penalty in Laos. Samantha Orobator, 20, has been in a Laotian prison since August last year. She was arrested at the international airport in Laos (2) \_\_\_\_ drugs charges. She is accused (3) \_\_\_\_ being in possession of 680g of heroin. Ms Orobator denies any (4) \_\_\_\_ of the drugs. She claims Laotian officials have made a terrible mistake and mistook her for a drug trafficker. The court in Laos has suddenly decided Samantha's trial will be next week. If she is (5) \_\_\_\_ guilty, she will receive the death penalty. The British government is very concerned as they (6) \_\_\_\_ have almost no time to help Samantha with a lawyer.

Human rights campaigners are very worried about Samantha. They have (7) \_\_\_\_ how she became pregnant while in prison, sparking (8) \_\_\_\_ she was raped. British lawyer Clive Stafford Smith said: "Nothing that happens in that prison is (9) \_\_\_\_." The jail has a very bad reputation and many prisoners complain of shocking abuse. Mr. Smith said: "If convicted next week, Samantha would (10) \_\_\_\_ death by firing squad. Samantha is severely distressed, and [we have] grave concerns for her health and (11) \_\_\_\_ of her unborn child." British Foreign Minister Bill Rammell said: "The British government is opposed to the use of the death penalty in all circumstances. We have made the Laos authorities aware of this at the (12) \_\_\_\_ levels."

**Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.**

- |     |                 |                |               |                 |
|-----|-----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | (a) fought      | (b) fights     | (c) fighter   | (d) fighting    |
| 2.  | (a) on          | (b) for        | (c) in        | (d) at          |
| 3.  | (a) on          | (b) for        | (c) of        | (d) at          |
| 4.  | (a) knowing     | (b) knowledge  | (c) knew      | (d) knows       |
| 5.  | (a) finding     | (b) found      | (c) finds     | (d) find        |
| 6.  | (a) no          | (b) know       | (c) now       | (d) not         |
| 7.  | (a) questioned  | (b) questions  | (c) question  | (d) questioning |
| 8.  | (a) frightened  | (b) fearful    | (c) afraid    | (d) fears       |
| 9.  | (a) volunteered | (b) volunteers | (c) volunteer | (d) voluntary   |
| 10. | (a) head        | (b) face       | (c) nose      | (d) mouth       |
| 11. | (a) that        | (b) what       | (c) which     | (d) this        |
| 12. | (a) height      | (b) tall       | (c) highest   | (d) big         |

## WRITING:

Write about **capital punishment** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

[illegible]

# HOMEWORK

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about capital punishment in different countries. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. DEATH PENALTY:** Make a poster about different methods of the death penalty. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. GUILTY:** Write a magazine article about someone found guilty of a crime and sentenced to the death penalty. Include imaginary interviews with that person and the judge who gave the sentence.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to British Foreign Minister Bill Rammell. Ask him three questions about Samantha's case. Give him three ideas on what he could do to help Samantha. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T      b. T      c. F      d. F      e. T      f. F      g. T      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. the death penalty | a. capital punishment |
| 2. prison            | b. jail               |
| 3. accused of        | c. charged with       |
| 4. receive           | d. get                |
| 5. concerned         | e. worried            |
| 6. questioned        | f. asked              |
| 7. sparking          | g. starting           |
| 8. reputation        | h. image              |
| 9. grave             | i. serious            |
| 10. aware            | j. conscious          |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. fighting a battle                      | a. against time              |
| 2. She is accused of being in possession  | b. of 680g of heroin         |
| 3. Ms Orobator denies any                 | c. knowledge of the drugs    |
| 4. If she is found guilty, she will       | d. receive the death penalty |
| 5. The British government                 | e. is very concerned         |
| 6. They have questioned how               | f. she became pregnant       |
| 7. The jail has a very bad                | g. reputation                |
| 8. grave concerns for her health and that | h. of her unborn child       |
| 9. opposed to the use                     | i. of the death penalty      |
| 10. at the highest                        | j. levels                    |

## GAP FILL:

### Pregnant Briton faces death penalty

British human rights lawyers are fighting a **battle** against time to save a Briton from the death penalty in Laos. Samantha Orobator, 20, has been in a Laotian prison **since** August last year. She was arrested at the international airport in Laos on drugs **charges**. She is accused of being in possession of 680g of heroin. Ms Orobator **denies** any knowledge of the drugs. She claims Laotian officials have made a terrible **mistake** and mistook her for a drug trafficker. The court in Laos has suddenly decided Samantha's **trial** will be next week. If she is found guilty, she will **receive** the death penalty. The British government is very **concerned** as they now have almost no time to help Samantha with a lawyer.

Human rights campaigners are very **worried** about Samantha. They have questioned how she became pregnant **while** in prison, sparking fears she was raped. British lawyer Clive Stafford Smith said: "Nothing that happens in that prison is **voluntary**." The jail has a very bad **reputation** and many prisoners complain of shocking abuse. Mr. Smith said: "If convicted next week, Samantha would **face** death by firing squad. Samantha is severely distressed, and [we have] grave **concerns** for her health and that of her unborn child." British Foreign Minister Bill Rammell said: "The British government is **opposed** to the use of the death penalty in all circumstances. We have made the Laos authorities **aware** of this at the highest levels."

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d      2 - a      3 - c      4 - b      5 - b      6 - c      7 - a      8 - d      9 - d      10 - b      11 - a      12 - c