

# British imposes controls on lethal injection drug

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**Associated Press**

LONDON -- Britain imposed controls on the export of a drug used in American executions Monday, following pressure from death penalty opponents who sought to make it more difficult for U.S. states to obtain the sedative.

Secretary of State for Business Vince Cable issued an order adding sodium thiopental to the list of items which must be licensed for export - meaning that companies seeking to ship the drugs abroad will be required to prove they are intended for legitimate medical use, not execution.

"This move underlines this government's and my own personal moral opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances without impacting legitimate trade," Cable said in a statement.

The order comes four weeks after London-based rights group Reprieve and London law firm Leigh Day & Co filed suit to halt the drug's export.

Cable said he imposed the controls after it became clear that U.S. law also forbids the import of the drug into the United States for medical purposes.

The issue became important after American states began going abroad to obtain the sedative, the first of three drugs given to death row inmates during the execution process. Arizona Chief Deputy Attorney General Tim Nelson said last month had used sodium thiopental imported from Britain to execute convicted killer Jeffrey Landrigan.

Jamie Beagent, an attorney for Leigh Day, praised Cable's decision.

"We are pleased that the Secretary of State has finally come to recognize that banning drugs from the UK for use in executions overseas is the morally right thing to do," he said.

Read more: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/29/1948267/uk-halts-export-of-lethal-injection.html#ixzz16mcfX6Tz>