

Criminal Responsibility for Premeditated Murder (Study of Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT)

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Abstract. *Premeditated murder requires proof not only of an intentional deprivation of life but also of prior planning and the defendant's capacity for criminal responsibility. This study examines the construction of criminal responsibility in Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT, focusing on the fulfilment of the elements of premeditated murder, participation, evidentiary reasoning, and sentencing considerations. The study employed a normative juridical method using statutory and case approaches. Primary legal materials consisted of the Indonesian Criminal Code and the selected court decision, while secondary materials included relevant books, journal articles, and legal scholarship. The materials were analysed descriptively and qualitatively by mapping the facts and evidence against the elements of Article 340 in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1)(1) of the Criminal Code. The findings show that the defendant was legally and convincingly proven to have intentionally participated in a jointly planned killing. The court found that the defendant possessed the capacity for criminal responsibility and identified no justification or excuse capable of eliminating his culpability. Witness testimony, the defendant's statements, and physical evidence collectively supported the findings of intention, participation, and prior planning. The court imposed 20 years' imprisonment after considering the brutality of the conduct and the victim's family's suffering as aggravating circumstances, while the defendant's admission, remorse, respectful conduct, and lack of previous convictions were treated as mitigating factors. The study concludes that criminal responsibility in jointly committed premeditated murder requires a clear evidentiary connection among individual participation, intention, prior planning, and culpability to ensure a legally certain and proportionate judgment.*

Keywords: *Criminal Responsibility, Premeditated Murder, Verdict Study, Article 340 of the Criminal Code, Criminal Act, Planning, Intent, Court Verdict*

Received: November 15, 2025

Revised: June 10, 2026

Accepted: August 2, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Murder is one of the worst crimes against human life, which is expressly regulated in Article 340 of the Indonesian Criminal Code. The provision covers anyone who, intentionally, with prior planning, kills someone else, and faces life imprisonment if they have done so with serious intent, with a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment, or death. The gravity of the sanctions is a reflection of the fact that premeditated murder carries significant levels of responsibility as opposed to regular murder, as the act is not only intentional, but also involves a period of thought and planning.

The concept of premeditated murder has been discussed in previous studies in various aspects such as the statutory construction of the act, the evidentiary requirements, the motive, criminal responsibility, and application in judicial decisions (Oktatianti et al., 2023; Rauzi et al., 2023; Christine et al., 2025; Armelia et al., 2024; Agusta et al., 2025; Laia et al., 2025; Pepa, 2022;

Anisah et al., 2026). These studies show that the offence remains a significant matter for the legal analysis and application of the offence relies on how judges interpret the intention and prior planning in the context of the facts which were being established during trial.

The element of prior planning can be seen as a distinction between the premeditated murder under Article 340 and ordinary murder under Article 338 of the Indonesian Criminal Code. Whereas ordinary murder also demands evidence that the killing was intentional, premeditated murder also demands evidence the intent to kill was formed prior to its execution. In most cases of prior planning, there is a gap between the time the intention is formed and when the offence is committed, giving the person time to think, rethink and abandon the crime.

Premeditation cannot, therefore, be proven from the death, the use of a weapon, the seriousness of the attack, or the defendant's "offensive motive. It has to be proved by evidence of a substantial relationship between the defendant's intention, preparation and action. This is especially significant, since criminal liability only exists if there are certain elements present, and not simply on the basis of suspicion or seriousness of the consequences. The prosecution is required to prove that the defendant (the accused) acted intentionally, with the mental capacity that was legally required, and was not afforded a justification or excuse.

Then the court will have to consider whether the evidence is legally and substantially proved to meet these requirements. This is crucial to safeguarding the rights of the accused and contributing to justice for the victim and legal security for society. Thus, in the case of premeditated murder, the question of criminal responsibility should be decided with careful consideration of the objective of the action and the subjective state of mind of the defendant (Situmeang & Aishah, 2024; Bahramanipour & Sharafabad, 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2023).

The problem of the evidentiary process is one that is difficult due to the fact that intention and a prior plan are internal mental states that cannot be directly observed. Their presence is deduced from objective circumstances of the offence. These might include the sequence of events, the relationship between the defendant and the victim, the preparation of implements used in the crime, communications before or after the event, choice of time and place, behaviour designed to hide the crime, evidence from witnesses and physical evidence, and defendant statements.

However, these types of situations are not necessarily enough to rule in favor of premeditation. The court has to create a clear connection between the facts available and how they prove that the defendant intended to kill upon committing the act. Judicial reasoning plays a key role in legal accountability, because of this evidentiary complexity. The judgment should not only be based on a finding that the elements of Article 340 are proven but should also demonstrate how each element is substantiated by the evidence offered during trial.

A particular distinction should be made between evidence of intention and evidence of prior planning, as these are both very closely related, yet legally different. An intention to kill does not necessarily point to a premeditated killing. This is because, otherwise, there is a risk of a loose notion of premeditation (Putra et al., 2025; Lutes et al., 2019; Capra & Richter, 2018). This is especially significant if a conviction could lead to the strictest penalties under criminal law. The court is required to establish the elements of the offence as well as establish whether the defendant can be held personally responsible for the conduct.

To be held criminally responsible, fault (deliberate or reckless) and the ability to appreciate and exercise control over one's actions must exist. Deliberation, awareness and control may be an important basis of evaluation in a premeditated murder case in which the extent and nature of the defendant's preparation would be a significant factor. But any such judgement must be related to legally admissible evidence and not be dependent on 'moral condemnation' of the act.

The law imposes particularly severe penalties on premeditated murder because it is an intentional act that has been planned (Pahlepi et al., 2024; Beno et al., 2020). However, severity of the offences cannot deny the obligation of Court to establish the criminal responsibility in a transparent, rational and legally sound manner. Researches on the elements and application of

premeditated murder in Indonesian criminal law have been useful in explaining the elements and use of premeditated murder.

For instance, Sholeha et al. (2020) looked at the case of premeditated murder from a legal perspective by analysing one judicial decision. Other studies have also explored the meaning of prior planning, the importance of motive, evidentiary standards and proportionality of punishment. But the application of these legal principles is highly case-specific and is tied to specific facts, evidence, and considerations of the court in each case.

The logic of one decision cannot be imported into another, since a different evaluation of the facts of the case, of the form of preparation, of the evidence or of the defendant's situation may lead to a different assessment of the case. As such, analysis of the facts in relation to the elements of the offence and the defence of criminal responsibility has to be done on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the facts established by the court are linked with the elements of the offence and the elements of criminal responsibility.

Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT can offer a context for the discussion of these issues. The decision should be reviewed not only on the basis of the findings but also on the basis of the reasoning of the judges which is used in determining whether there was intention, prior planning, fault and criminal responsibility. A decisional analysis is necessary to determine if this decision is consistent with the principles of culpability, legality, evidentiary certainty and proportional punishment and punishment.

It also enables the study to determine the extent to which the court changed the facts and evidence given in court during the trial into legal conclusions about the defendant's liability. Thus, the relevance of the case is not only with regard to the prosecution before Article 340, but also in the correlation of the findings in the court of facts and the judiciary's construction of premeditated murder.

The main study on Article 340 was continued after the enactment of Law No. 1 of 2023 concerning the Criminal Code of Indonesia in 2026 which made Article 459 applicable to premeditated murder. B/2023/PN.SIT was adjudicated under the laws that applied to the case. The time context should be clearly distinguished, so as not to get confused by the statutory basis used by the court and subsequent developments in Indonesian criminal law. The study is not intended to make a full comparison between the old and new Criminal Codes. Rather, it is only concerned with the application of criminal responsibility and the elements of premeditated murder in the chosen case.

This study analyzes and discusses criminal responsibility for premeditated murder by using normative juridical method in the context of Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT. It specifically examines the interpretation of the elements of intention and prior planning by the Court and the principles on which it built its conviction in the criminal responsibility of the accused and the appropriate sentence for the crime. The study also provides a case-specific legal analysis by linking the relevant sections of the statute, the criminal-law principles, the issues of evidence, and the combination of judicial opinions. The purpose of this analysis is to facilitate the understanding of the construction of the criminal responsibility of premeditated murder and its application in the judicial practice in Indonesia.

METHODS

The study used a normative juridical research to investigate the criminal responsibility of premeditated murder in Decision No. 174/PID. Given that the study concerns legal norms, principles, doctrines, and judicial reasoning, normative juridical research was opted for instead of collecting empirical data directly from the participants, which in this case are defendants, judges, witnesses, etc. The unit of analysis was the court decision, and the content of the court decision was analysed in terms of the facts established at court, the evidence presented, the elements of the offence, the defendant's criminal responsibility, judges' legal considerations, and the sentence imposed. This design allowed the study to determine the consistency of the

application of criminal law in the decision with the applicable statute and criminal responsibility principles. The study was conducted using the statutory and case approach. Statutory approach was applied in this study to analyse the legal provisions concerning murder, premeditated murder, criminal responsibility, evidence and punishment with the legal provision that is applied in this case is Article 340 of the Indonesian Criminal Code. Article 338 was also thought to provide a legal definition of ordinary murder versus premeditated murder. As for the case approach, the work was done to examine the facts and the evidence presented in Decision No. 174/PID and to analyze how the panel of judges interpreted and applied these provisions in this case.B/2023/PN.SIT. The analysis was not intended to investigate the factual case by field investigation, but rather to consider the legal construction and judicial reasoning in the written judgment.

The study was conducted using primary and secondary sources of law. The main legal documents were the Indonesian Criminal Code, laws about criminal procedures and evidence, and Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT. The court decision best serves as the main legal document as it includes the facts, evidence, legal arguments, judicial considerations, and ruling pertinent to the research question. Secondary legal materials comprised books, peer-reviewed journal articles, previous legal studies, and other scholarly work regarding criminal responsibility, intention, advanced planning, evidentiary requirements, and punishment of premeditated murder. The materials used in this work was used to explain the applicable doctrines and to assess the reasoning used in the selected decision (Wijaya et al, 2024; Ramadhani, 2021; Olorunfemi, 2015; Kartika, 2020; Holborn, 2018). Document and literature review were used to gather legal materials. The first step in the collection was determining the rules that governed ordinary murder and premeditated murder, and the general rules of criminal responsibility. The team then analysed Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT to determine the relevant chronology of the case, the prosecution's indictments, the evidence before the court, the defendant's defence and the judges' reasoning. The legal materials were then analyzed into a number of analytical categories: the capacity to be held responsible, the presence or absence of fault, the existence of intention, the element of prior planning, action of taking another's life, the absence of justifying or excusing circumstances, and the legal basis for punishment. Secondly, there were secondary materials organised according to the relevance of these categories, and were used to support interpretation of the primary legal materials.

The analysis of the material collected was analyzed descriptively qualitatively with the legal approach. This analysis was conducted in phases. Statutory provisions and laws of criminal law were identified and interpreted first. Second, the elements of premeditated murder and criminal responsibility were developed as the norms of assessing the decision. Third, all the facts and evidence accepted by the Court were plotted against all the elements of the law. Fourth, the reasoning of the judges was analysed to see if they were clear in linking findings of intention, prior planning, fault and criminal capacity with the evidence. Lastly, the considerations of the sentence and judicial were examined in the context of justice, legal certainty, culpability and proportionality. The analysis was thus carried out on the basis of interpretation of the statute, doctrinal analysis and the evaluation of cases, without adding any facts beyond those provided in the legal materials. In order to ensure analytical consistency, the content of the judgment was compared with the relevant statute and the general criminal-law principles. Several legal resources provided an interpretation of the decision, in order to avoid relying on a single scholarly opinion. There was a specific focus on consistency with the established facts, evidence used, implementation of each of the elements of Article 340, and defendant's criminal liability. This approach can be used when the intention is to be able to create an overall picture of the legal framework, principles, rules, and concepts associated with premeditated murder, but not the actual conduct of those committing the murder themselves, and instead through a systematic examination of existing legal materials.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Material Findings of Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT

Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT is about the liability of Briyan Prasetyo (Billy), son of Supriyanto, in a pre-planned murder in collaboration with others. Defendant was 24 years of age at time of proceedings. Defendant was prosecuted with an alternative indictment, the first alternative being Article 340 in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1)(1) of the Indonesian Criminal Code. The defendant was not just considered as an individual killer but as one who joined in the killing plan. The legal questions before the court were whether the defendant's actions met the elements of involvement in premeditated murder and whether he was able to be held criminally responsible. The court was thus bound to consider whether the death had taken place and that the killing had been deliberate, had been planned, and done by the defendant in conscious action. The central nature of these questions was emphasised because there is no requirement under Article 55 to exclude the determination of the defendant's personal contribution, fault and relationship to the jointly committed offence.

The findings of fact were based on the evidence presented at trial, the defendant's statements and the physical evidence in front of the court. The items of physical evidence consisted of a 56cm sickle, a 21cm knife, some mobile telephones, clothing, bottles linked to alcohol and motorcycles. The presence of these materials did not necessarily constitute premeditation. Their legal significance was dependent on what relationship they had to the chronology of the crime, the actions of the defendant and others involved in the crime, and the testimony that was received by the court. The judges, therefore, reviewed the evidence in its entirety to decide whether it was a unified narrative of the defendant's involvement in the planned killing.

The panel of judges determined that the defendant was aware of his actions and the meaning and impact of his actions. He was defenceless against any mental condition which rendered him unable to understand or control his actions that was established as a result of the proceedings. The court also did not find any justification or excuse that would remove the unlawfulness of the conduct or defendant's culpability. In this regard, the defendant was deemed capable of committing a crime and therefore held personally responsible for his involvement in the crime.

The court finally ruled that Briyan Prasetyo, known as Billy, had been "convincingly" and "legally" found guilty of "participating in premeditated murder", under the prosecutor's original alternate indictment. Defendant was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment, of which 10 years have already been served. He was also mandated to pay court costs worth of IDR 5,000. A motorcycle believed to have been used in the offence was impounded and some physical evidence relating to the offence was destroyed. The other property was returned to the designated witness.

The panel took into account aggravating and mitigating circumstances before deciding on sentencing. The aggravating factors were the defendant's actions were especially shocking and that they caused the victim's family great grief and loss. The mitigating factors are that the defendant behaved well during the trial, acknowledged his actions, apologised and promised to not do it again and had no prior criminal record. Taking all this into account, the judges felt that the sentence of 20 years was suitable to the gravity of the offence and the offender's culpability.

These results indicate three main points for further investigation. First, the court considered that the defendant was legally competent to take on the responsibility of a criminal. Second, it found that he would be found guilty of being a participant in a premeditated murder in which the victim had been committed. Third, it thought the maximum sentence of a fixed term of imprisonment was proportionate having taken into account the seriousness of the conduct and the mitigating circumstances. The following analysis should be conducted to determine if the court properly found the elements of criminal responsibility, planning, and participation beyond a general definition of "premeditated murder."

Establishment of the Elements of Premeditated Murder

The difference between a premeditated murder and an ordinary murder is that in the former the killer intends to kill the victim prior to the act of killing. As a general rule, murder is a human act that results in another person's death, thus involving two main actors, the murderer and the victim (Holland et al., 2018; Zulyadi, 2020). But death does not constitute an offence in itself and make it a premeditated murder. The prosecution also has to prove the defendant acted intentionally and that there was a process of planning prior to the intention. The Indonesian Criminal Code (KK) defines ordinary murder in Article 338, which is where it is found to be intentional killing of another person.

There is the same essential implication in Article 340 – the willful taking of life – but the one of planning. This is an added element, which makes it more culpable as it shows that the offence did not occur out of an immediate or spontaneous intention. Rather the defendant had earlier formed an intention to commit the act and had an opportunity, although a short one, to reflect on the act in question and the consequences thereof. Thus, there is a higher penalty for the premeditated murder which may lead to a lifetime sentence or even death. In the decision of No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT, the defendant was charged and convicted under Article 340 in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1)(1) of the Criminal Code. The court, therefore, had to define the meaning of the words 'any person', 'intentionally', 'with prior planning', 'taking the life of another person' and for the commission of the offence. The elements were assessed separately, but as a unified legal entity.

The Element of "Any Person"

Any person means the legal person to whom a crime may be charged. In the present case, this element was a reference to the identity of Briyan Prasetyo, who was known as "Billy" and was the son of Supriyanto, his father, who was identified in the proceedings. There was no report of any disagreement regarding the defendant's identity and the defendant could answer the indictment and take part in the trial. Thus, the court determined that the person before it was the same person facing charges by the public prosecutor. This element was consequently fulfilled. However, even if the legal subject was found to be the defendant, it did not automatically indicate his guilt. The prosecution still had to establish that the defendant intentionally engaged in conduct which met the other elements of Article 340. Its role was thus procedural and personal, it was to relate the alleged criminal activity to a particular person who had the power to be examined and held responsible.

The Element of Intention

The subjective aspect of murder is the intent. It relates to the defendant's deliberate action to cause the proscribed act and the proscribed result, whether the result is actually achieved or not, and whether or not it was definitely accepted. According to the doctrine of the criminal law in Indonesia, there are three forms of intent, namely: direct purpose, awareness of certainty, and awareness of possibility. Murder cases: intention can be presumed from the nature of the act, the weapon used, the part of the victim's body that was targeted, the intensity of the attack, the defendant's behaviour before and after the attack, and any other circumstances that suggest the defendant knew the act could prove fatal. The court in the analysed decision determined the defendant was voluntarily involved with the action that led to the victim's death. This was a result of the overall evaluation of the evidence presented at trial, which included witness accounts, the defendant's admissions and evidence relating to the crime. Any weapons and other items that were turned over at trial were legally relevant to the relationship between the defendant's conduct and the deadly act.

The Court also found that the defendant was conscious and knew what he was doing. The defendant's involvement was not accidental or negligent; these considerations support this finding. The court should, however, not be confused between "intention" and "prior planning". Objective evidence that the defendant intended to commit the killing could be used to establish

the subjective element of murder, but not to show that the defendant's intention was to be formed after deliberation. The legal aspect needs to go beyond the issue of deliberate conduct and whether there was a plan in place before the offence was committed.

The Element of Prior Planning

The difference between Article 340 and 338 lies in the planning which precedes it. It is normally the case that proof of a decision formed before the execution of the act, a lapse of time between decision and action, and the opportunity to rethink the act of killing is required. The interval doesn't have to be a long one. The important question is whether the situation would have given the defendant a chance to reflect logically on what he was about to do and yet still go ahead and do it. Preparatory conduct may consist of preparatory acts, the choice or preparation of the weapons, co-ordination by the participants, the time and place of the crime, communication before the crime and/or acts intended to facilitate the crime. But a gun or more than one player should not be a definitive evidence by itself. The court is required to set out a logical, and evidentiary, relationship between those factors and the formation of the intent to kill. In Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN. The court ruled the killing to be a joint one and executed in advance by SIT. This conviction under Article 340 along with Article 55 paragraph (1) suggests that the panel believed that the defendant's involvement was part of a premeditated plan and not an impulsive action that took place at the scene.

This was based on the evidence including the weapons, mobile telephones, motorcycles, witness evidence and a statement by the defendant. These factors from the court's point of view showed a connection between preparation, joint involvement and the eventual murder. Nevertheless, the quality of this finding depends on whether the judicial reasoning clearly explains when the intention to kill was formed, what preparatory actions were undertaken, how the defendant was involved in those actions, and whether he had a genuine opportunity to reconsider or withdraw. Merely stating that the offence was committed jointly does not by itself establish prior planning. A stronger legal justification requires the judgment to connect the chronological and evidentiary facts directly to the three dimensions of premeditation: the formation of the intention, the interval for reflection, and the execution of the previously formed plan.

The Element of Taking Another Person's Life

The object element of murder requires conduct which results in the death of another person. The prohibited consequence of the making of the offence, being the death of the victim, is a material one, and as such the offence is a material offence. Three elements need to be established: the presence of the defendant's conduct, another person's death and the causal connection between the defendant's conduct and the other person's death. In the present case, the court agreed that someone had died as a result of the violent acts which were both committed together. The witness evidence and physical evidence was accepted as corroboration of the offence and the role played by the defendant. The determination of causation was thus not looked at in isolation but as part of the collective conduct of the participants. The defendant being prosecuted on the basis of participation, the court was not constrained to deciding who inflicted each injury. It was also essential to ascertain if the defendant had been knowingly involved in the common complicity of the offence.

Participation Under Article 55 Paragraph (1)(1)

The court's use of the wording of Article 55 paragraph (1) (1) was important since it establishes that the defendant was involved in a premeditated murder, and not a homicide committed on his own. Criminal participation is not an act that their involvement is limited to the place of the offence or even just that they knew an offence would be committed. It demands the defendant's involvement in the offence in a way that involves his will and also a close connection between his actions and the performance of the common criminal purpose. Since the court determined the defendant's participation was active and significant, it is likely that the defendant

was convicted of the crime. He was involved in the shared scheme, the execution of the killings and the evidence presented in the trial. In this way, the defendant may be liable for the finished crime even if he or she was not a party to the crime.

The application of Article 55, then, linked his own guilt to the premeditated murder that he and his co-actors had committed together. The Court found that the requirement of Article 340, along with the requirement of Article 55 (1) (1) had been legally and convincingly met. The defendant was identified as the legal subject of the responsibility, he knew what he was doing and he had participated maliciously and in advance, his actions led to the victim's death, and he had been a part of the offence. The depth of the court's explanation of prior planning, however, is the most important analytical issue. As a result of the element of premeditation being what distinguishes premeditation murder from ordinary murder, and thus justifies the substantially greater penalty, it must be established through a very close temporal, evidentiary and defendant linkage.

Criminal Responsibility of the Defendant

Criminal Responsibility is the legal and moral question of whether a person who has committed an offence can be held legally responsible and be punished. It is not established based on the objective elements of a criminal offence being fulfilled. The court shall also have to decide if the illegal activity could have been subjectively attributed to the defendant by reason of fault and if the defendant had the capacity to understand and control the act. As a result, the concept of criminal responsibility is linked to the circumstances under which the crime is taken place, as well as the person's condition which is the basis for imposing punishment (Njoku et al., 2024; Veresha, 2017; Hailtik & Afifah, 2023). This distinction is significant because the question of the presence of a crime and the criminal responsibility of the perpetrator is not one but two analytically distinct questions. The first is whether criminal conduct actually took place and the second is whether the person who committed and/or participated in that criminal conduct can be held responsible for it. It follows that criminal responsibility needs to be more than just proof of physical involvement. It presupposes that there be fault, that the person be capable of being held responsible, and that there be no circumstances that would eliminate the unlawfulness of the act or excuse the person. On a wider legal level, responsibility is also related to the legal responsibility, moral judgment and the legitimate use of state punishment (Hanafi, 2015).

Capacity to Be Held Responsible

The power to be held responsible relates to the defendant's mental capacity at the time of the crime. Persons are usually presumed to be capable of committing a crime if they can understand the nature and consequences of the behaviour, appreciate that the behaviour is illegal or socially unacceptable, and be able to exercise control over the behaviour based on their understanding. This ability serves as the basis for assigning blame, as punishment is not warranted if the defendant lacked the ability to understand or control the conduct in question. There is also a legal connection between a criminal's psychological state and his or her will to control him or herself (Lacey & Pickard, 2013; Putri & Waluyo, 2024). While Simons stresses the power to see the badness of the deed and to be able to suppress one's will, Van Hamel distinguishes the power to know the meaning and consequences from the power to know the badness of the deed and to be able to suppress one's will.

Pompe also connects the capacity for reasoning and conscious decision making of behavior with responsibility (Jauhari et al., 2025). While these formulations have slightly different language, they all make the proposition that sufficient intellectual and volitional capacity is a precondition to criminal responsibility. Article 44 of the Criminal Code (CC) of Indonesia provides a defense of punishment if the person is not able to be convicted due to mental retardation or mental disorder. This clause cannot be satisfied by the existence of unusual behaviour, emotional disturbance, anger and/or intoxication alone. The real question is whether the defendant's state impaired his or her capacity to comprehend what he or she was doing or how he or she was doing it. Thus, where a claim is made that the defendant is less responsible or has no responsibility for

the offence, it is necessary to take into account his mental state at the time of the offence. A refugee is defined in Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT, the court said Briyan Prasetyo could be held responsible for the crime. The defendant was competent to stand trial, knew the charges against him, and responded to the issues before him on trial.

The judgment did not find that he was mentally ill, had a defective psychological development, or any other reason why he was unable to understand the nature and consequences of his actions. His conduct and statements were instead regarded as demonstrating conscious awareness and the ability to determine his actions. Capacity should not be determined by age or physical health of the defendant alone. A presumption of responsibility may be based on a sense of adulthood, but it does not automatically mean that there is a psychological capacity. This was due to the lack of evidence of a legally relevant mental disorder, the defendant's conduct before, during and after the offence and his capacity to participate meaningfully in the trial in the stronger case. The court therefore found that the responsibility was not taken away from him by Article 44. This is in keeping with the broader rule that a mental illness shall not be a defense to criminal responsibility unless the illness renders the person incapable of understanding or controlling his or her behaviour (Crocker et al, 2015; Charette et al, 2015).

The Existence of Fault

The main subjective factor of criminal responsibility is fault. It makes sure punishment can only be given if it can be personally attributed to the one who committed the prohibited act. Fault can be in the form of intention or negligence, depending on the construction of the offence in the statute (Alfero & Rahayu, 2024; Dewi, 2022; Chamicho, 2026; Hanifah, 2022). Pre meditated murder has an intention as a form of fault since the deprivation of life has to be done intentionally and there is no doubt such an intention was intended in the case of pre meditated murder. The concept of geen straf zonder schuld (no punishment without fault) means that no punishment should be automatically imposed just because an undesirable outcome took place. In accordance with this principle, the court should establish a subjective connection between the defendant and the crime.

The court in the present case had to find that the defendant knew that the intended action was going to be fatal, knowingly helped to carry it out, and had the intention to engage in the common act. The evidence received at trial convinced the court that the defendant's involvement was deliberate and intentional. He was not described as "accidentally present," "assisting involuntarily," or "facilitating negligently. But the conviction in Article 340, in conjunction with Article 55, paragraph (1)(1), showed that he was "aware that he was involved in the execution of a plan previously formed. The defendant's fault was therefore linked to his own fault and to his conscious participation in the jointly committed offence. The objective blame becomes the subjective blame, or criminal responsibility, is explained by Roeslan Saleh.

The subjective aspect of blame relates to whether it is the individual accused of the crime who could be said to have caused the violation; the objective aspect of blame is whether the conduct breaches a criminal law. If the perpetrator cannot be held responsible due to a legally recognised condition, they cannot be punished. This relationship illustrates how criminal responsibility can be seen as a legal mechanism for linking prohibited action, the personal responsibility of the individual and legitimate punishment (Lacey & Pickard, 2015; Darley, 2009). For the current case, the facts of the action were found to be the joint actions of the offenders which led to the victim's death and met the criteria of premeditated murder. The subjective blame came from the court's conclusion that the defendant was conscious and deliberate in his involvement in the crime and knew and could control what he was doing. These findings, together, led to the defendant's conviction for criminal liability.

Absence of Justifying and Excusing Circumstances

Lack of a justification/excuse is also a prerequisite for criminal responsibility. A justification removes the unlicensed nature of the act, an excuse doesn't render the act lawful but

it does remove or lessen the personal blameworthiness of the perpetrator. The distinction is significant as the same act may be in the nature of an offence, and yet not be penalised because it is legally recognised as a valid excuse or justification. The court found that it could not determine any circumstances that would remove the unlawfulness of the defendant's conduct. The killing was not in lawful self-defence, or in pursuant to a statutory command, or in execution of a legitimate official duty. Thus there was no justification to be given. In a similar way, the court did not find situations that would demonstrate that the defendant was subject of an unavoidable coercive condition, was mentally incapable in the meaning of Article 44, or was affected by any other condition that would remove personal blame. No excuse therefore did he withdraw from his obligation. No reason or excuse was given further to reinforce the court's belief that the defendant should be held legally accountable for his actions. However, this kind of conclusion should not be worded as a cliché. A judicious consideration of the facts in the case should uncover the circumstances brought up in the trial and should explain why none of those circumstances meets the legal criteria for the denial of responsibility. The transparency with which all the elements of responsibility are illustrated is of particular importance in the case of a severe sentence, where legitimacy of punishment depends on it.

Assessment of Criminal Responsibility

Four interconnected findings were made by the court that led to the defendant being convicted. Firstly, an act constituting a criminal offence had been committed in a manner that fulfilled the elements of premeditated murder. Secondly, the defendant acted knowingly in that conduct. Third, he was mentally competent to know and regulate himself. Fourth, he could not be cleared, even of his own fault, of the guilt of the act or of his own responsibility for it. These findings formed the foundation of finding him guilty and awarding him the punishment. The finding that the defendant was the criminal causer is in line with the principle that punishment should be based on both an unlawful act and the defendant's personal fault. But the analytical power of the sentence is subject to the extent of its linking of the evidence to the defendant's role in the jointly committed crime. Participation should not be assumed on the basis of association with the other offenders when it is a case of participation. It is based on evidence that the defendant knew, intentionally participated in, and was involved in the plan and killing. Thus, the defendant's responsibilities had not only been his presence at the time of the offence and his relationship with others but that he was involved in an intended killing and that his involvement was intentional, significant and linked to the implementation of the planned killing. That involvement was not subject to mental capacity, justification, and excuse, and thus was translated into criminal blame. Therefore the court found that he was legally and convincingly responsible for participating in premeditated murder.

Judicial Evidentiary Reasoning

The central question in determining a premeditated murder case from an intentional killing case is to see the difference in the evidence. In Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN. To establish that the victim had died, and that the defendant had engaged in the relevant conduct, and that the killing had been preceded by a plan, the evidence had to establish these points for the court. The evidentiary issues were thus whether the crime was actually committed, whether the defendant had a guilty intent, whether there was any planning on the part of the defendant, and whether there was any relationship between the defendant and the other parties involved. The evidence in a criminal case shall be admissible and shall be mutually supportive. The reconstruction of an offence may be made up of witness evidence, statements made by the defendant, physical objects, documents and expert evidence. But the validity and pertinence of each item should be judged in relation to the contested legal elements. When evidence is used to infer a defendant's state of mind, as to intention and planning, for example, it should be used with care because intention and prior planning cannot be seen. They are supposed to be inferred from the substantiated circumstances that exist in the outside world (Leo et al., 2012; Wang & Liu, 2019; Alceste et al., 2020; O'Donnell & Safer, 2017; Wells et al., 2020).

Witness Testimony and the Defendant's Statements

Evidence from witnesses was crucial to the events that led up to the offence and to pinpoint the defendant's role in the offence. Whether the witnesses said what they saw, whether there was internal consistency, whether the witnesses' testimony matched other evidence were all factors that determined its legal value. What is said in testimony does not necessarily have to be true, it has to be tested against the chronology, physical evidence, and testimony of others. In the analysed case the court accepted the evidence in favour of the finding of jointly committed killing and conscious participation by the defendant. The testimony was considered in conjunction with the defendant's own testimony and the physical evidence presented at trial. This joint evaluation was important because it was crucial that a statement alone cannot be the basis for a determination of premeditation when corroborating factors are present. Defendant confessed to his actions, was well behaved throughout the trial, and remorseful. His admission was given in support of the finding of participation and it was then treated as a mitigating circumstance.

However, a plea should not be presumed to be guilty of all the elements charged in the indictment. The court continued to have the responsibility of determining whether the admission was voluntary, consistent and substantiated by other evidence. This is to prevent inaccurate pressure, misunderstanding, contamination, or interpretation of the law affecting confessions and admissions, which would impact the accuracy of the judicial process (Welner et al. 2025; Daly et al. 2021; Fraser 2026). In this instance, the defendant's statement was not used as the only evidence for convicting the man. It was considered along with the evidence of the witnesses, physical evidence and the general context of the offence committed jointly. The involvement in the finding of participation was enhanced by this approach. The distinction between an admission of participation and evidence of the defendant's knowledge of and conscious participation in the previous plan to kill, however, should not be lost. The latter is necessary to render him liable under Article 340 along with Article 55 paragraph (1)(1).

Physical and Documentary Evidence

The physical evidence that was looked at by the court was a 56cm sickle, a 21cm knife, a number of cellphones, clothes, bottles linked to alcoholic drinks, and motorcycles. These objects assisted the reconstruction of the offense and the role of the participants. The court provided instructions for the destruction, seizure for state, or restitution of items as evidence of the crime and rightful owner. The sickle and knife were especially significant since they could link the violent acts to the victim's death. However, they gained probative value through additional discovery regarding the victim's possession, use, location and relationship to the injuries suffered. The discovery of weapons can corroborate an inference of intent if the weapon's nature, handling and targeting of the body part suggests that the shooter was aware of the lethal potential. However, just having or being armed does not alone constitute evidence of a prior plan of murder. The mobile telephones might be able to be used for communication and coordination among the participants. Electronic communications can help establish contact prior to the offence, distribution of roles, or activities conducted to facilitate the offense. But the usefulness of the devices in an analysis is subject to the extent to which they were reviewed and linked to the crime. The collection, preservation and evaluation of the electronic evidence should be conducted in a manner that ensures it is authentic, complete and connected to the accused (Wang & Liu, 2019).

It would therefore be helpful for the judgement to address the question of whether the mobile telephones were used to give substantive communication evidence or whether they were simply objects seized as part of the proceedings. The motorcycles were involved in the offence and the movement of the participants. One motorcycle was seized by the state as being used in the crime and the other was returned to a witness. This distinction reflects that the court did not view all seized property as equal, but rather based his analysis on the legal relationship between each item and the crime. Nevertheless, there must still be a connection to the defendant's knowledge and involvement in the offence before there can be an inference of coordinated planning when the use of a vehicle is relevant to an offence. When physical and forensic evidence

is able to strengthen the proof of a planned killing by establishing the manner of death, the use of weapons, the manner in which the victim acted, and the relationship between preparation and execution, it can be a strong proof. Forensic examination can also give the objective evidence of the prosecution account, to minimize the dependence on uncorroborated statements (Putra et al., 2025; Liana et al., 2024; Laia et al., 2025; Anisah et al., 2026). The manuscript does not offer information about the results of a forensic report or examination. Any analysis should then only be based on the evidence specifically referred to in the decision and not make assumptions about any other forensic findings.

Evidence of Intention

The court used the nature of the defendant's involvement, the violence that he exhibited, the weapons he used in the crime, and the circumstances he took in trial to infer intention. The intent to cause death can be inferred from the defendant's conduct when it shows that he is making a conscious choice to engage in acts directed toward causing death. Inferences may be supported by the use of lethal weapons in an attack, as well as the events of the attack itself, if the attack cannot be reasonably explained by accident or negligence. However, the reasons of the judge should make clear how the evidence showed defendant's personal intention. The court had to differentiate the conduct of the defendant from that of the other participants, and at the same time, explain the common criminal purpose that tied them together as they carried out the offence together. No individual culpability can be avoided by collective action. All participants must have the mental element for the offence and that they knowingly be a part of a common plan. The defendant's admission and participation corroborated the defendant's knowledge of the conduct. Mental incapacity was not an issue, and that strengthened the argument that he knew what he was doing and the ramifications of it. All this evidence culminated in the decision that his involvement was deliberate. But a more academic analysis should clarify whether his intent was to cause the victim's death or just engaged in an assault or other type of violence.

Evidence of Prior Planning

Proving prior planning is more challenging than proving intention. The court shall find that there is an opportunity for reflection and circumstances that the killing decision was formed prior to the execution of the act. Evidence can encompass conversations, weapon preparation, planning of transport, choice of venue, division of tasks or actions that aid or conceal the crime. The court considered the offence to be plotted and concerted under Article 340 along with Article 55 paragraph (1)(1). The weapons, mobile telephones, motorcycles, testimony and statements made by the defendant were all considered to be part of a larger evidentiary presentation which led to this conclusion. These objects only become significant when the judgment makes these connections clear to the planning. An example of this is the preparation of a weapon before the event this could be proving that there was some intent to commit premeditation but if one has found on the scene, then that could indicate that the object was used in the commission of a murder without any previous planning.

This distinction also holds true for communication evidence, as well as evidence related to transportation. If the participants communicate with each other prior to the offense, the communication could show coordination, but it must be proved that the communication was about the planned killing or that it facilitated the killing. Likewise, if someone goes with another individual, it does not imply a plan. Thus, the reasoning of the evidence ought to detail the time when the plan was developed, what the participants agreed to do, how the defendant participated in the plan, and any opportunity he had to withdraw prior to the commission of the crime. The need for such specificity is particularly important because motive and premeditation are not identical. A personal conflict may explain why the offence occurred, but it does not independently prove that the defendant planned the killing. Motive provides context, whereas premeditation concerns the process through which the intention was formed and implemented. The court must therefore avoid treating the existence of a conflict as a substitute for proof of prior planning.

Evidentiary Sufficiency and Judicial Conviction

For a lawful conviction, the court must be based upon adequate legal evidence, and the court must form a reasoned conviction of the defendant's guilt. The relationship of the evidence should lead to judicial conviction, not the emotional seriousness of the crime. The court shall state the reasons for particular testimony and how the physical evidence was related to the defendant and how the evidence in each element was satisfied. The evaluation of evidence should also avoid the risk of misidentification, unreliable testimony, tainted admissions, or overstated inferences drawn from a defendant's conduct. Research in the field of confessions, eyewitness testimony and criminal adjudication suggests that evidentiary reliability should be critically evaluated rather than taken at face value, as an apparently coherent confession might be false (Leo et al., 2012; Alceste et al., 2020; O'Donnell & Safer, 2017; Wells et al., 2020).

This is particularly so if the offence involves life imprisonment or the death penalty. Expert and scientific evidence also can play an important role when the defendant's state of mind, cause of death, authenticity of electronic communications or how the injury came about is in question. This type of evidence can help the court in reaching its decisions on issues outside its jurisdiction, but it should not supersede the court's power to decide legal guilt (Gil & Maculan, 2015; Hafner, 2019). In the present case the evidence available does not refer to a significant disagreement about the defendant's mental competence, or make experts evidence the basis of conviction. The court, instead, accepted the evidence over the overall consistency of the evidence, the defendant's statement and the physical evidence. The court eventually found the evidence to be adequate to prove that the defendant was "deliberately involved" in a "jointly planned killing." It also decided that he was criminally competent and there was no justification or excuse. These finding was the basis of the conviction and the 20 year sentence.

The legal point of view is also in line with the structure of Article 340 read in conjunction with Article 55 paragraph (1)(1). But the quality of the judicial reasoning relies on whether the decision adequately shows the time and purpose link between defendant and the earlier plan. The evidentiary analysis should not stop at the conclusion of the offence being proven in court. It should show how the evidence was used to connect and confirm the findings of intention, planning, participation, causation and responsibility. A judgment with this connection is not only transparent, but also helps to protect against arbitrary punishment and enhances legal certainty. It also guarantees the harsh penalties that come with a premeditated murder conviction are based on proven reasoning, not speculation about the defendant or the gravity of the crime (Fox & Levin, 2022).

Sentencing Considerations and Legal Implications

Sentencing is the last step in converting a guilty verdict to a punishment. In a premeditated murder, the court has to decide not only if the defendant is guilty, but also what punishment is fair and just for the severity of the crime, the defendant's culpability, the harm done to the victim, the harm done to the victim's family, and the circumstances of the crime. Sentencing cannot then be conducted in isolation and the imposition of the most severe sentence possible cannot be automatic. Article 340 of the Indonesian Criminal Code that is applicable in the case offers three main types of sentences: death penalty, life imprisonment, and imprisonment for a fixed term of up to 20 years.

The alternatives bear out the general principle that murder is an extremely serious offence, but, the law may make a distinction between the facts and personal circumstances of different cases. With multiple sanctions available, the judges are expected to justify their choice when it comes to selecting the most suitable punishment as opposed to the other legally available options. In serious criminal cases sentencing shall be accompanied by clear and personal reasoning. The court should consider the nature of the offence, the role played by the defendant, the extent of their preparation, how the offence was carried out, the effects of the behaviour and the likelihood of the defendant being rehabilitated. In addition, comparative sentencing scholarship highlights the need to guarantee that the severity of a punishment or its indeterminacy, be determined

through a process that takes into account the gravity of the offence and the individual's particular circumstances (Szydło, 2015; Blick, 2023; Surendranath & Misra, 2024). While these studies are from different jurisdictions, they all reinforce the fundamental idea that the legitimacy of a harsh punishment must be based on clear and appropriately reasoned judicial decisions.

Aggravating Circumstances

In Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN. In this context, the judges of the panel, called SIT, drew two main aggravating circumstances. First, the defendant's actions were deemed to be brutally so. Secondly, there was deep grievance and loss felt by the victim's family. They were due to the way the crime was carried out and the impact over time of the death of the victim. The violence in the conduct added to the gravity of the crime it was obvious that there was a significant level of violence and disregard of human life. Yet, the court should make sure that this is not a rehash of one of the elements already found in premeditated murder.

The death and the fact that there was some planning are part of the offence. Hence, brutality can be an added aggravating circumstance only when the way of execution shows that the crime was committed with a level of cruelty far greater than what is normally needed to prove the crime. The feelings and suffering experienced by the victim's family were also pertinent as homicide leaves emotional, psychological and social effects on the victim's family. The impact of the offence is not limited to the deceased, but it is extended to relatives, who have to suffer the grief and impact of the offence. Understanding the impact will allow sentencing to recognize the true harm. This must, however, be linked to evidence or circumstances presented during trial and be a general assumption for every murder case it must not be suggested in isolation.

The concurrent nature of the offence also made it more serious. While the factors cited in the judgment were brutality and loss of family, committing an attack in a coordinated fashion may suggest a higher degree of preparation and make it more difficult to avoid or resist such attack. Therefore it is important to take into account the exact nature of the defendant's role when determining his culpability. Unless a participant's participation is of the same kind and to the same extent as the one of the person who designed, directed or initiated the killing, the latter can be held legally accountable under Article 55 while the former could be to a lesser extent.

Mitigating Circumstances

The court noted a number of mitigating factors. The defendant was good during the proceedings, had no previous criminal conviction, admitted that he had behaved badly between his wife and her parents, and expressed remorse. These included his behavior in court, his feelings about the crime and his own criminal record. The defendant's admission may be viewed as a mitigating circumstance as it indicated that this defendant cooperated with the investigation and avoided contesting issues he accepted. It may also indicate a willingness to accept responsibility. The weight should be based on the voluntary nature, completeness, and timing of the admission, and its contribution to the proceedings. Early and meaningful cooperation may be given more consideration than an admission made after significant evidence is furnished. Remorse also had a bearing on the consideration of the defendant's personal history and capacity to be rehabilitated.

However, the evaluation of remorse should be done carefully. Saying sorry verbally is not enough to provide true moral acknowledgment of the harm done. The court may take into account if the defendant's words matched his actions, and if the defendant had understanding of the victim's family's consequences. A lack of prior criminal record aided the determination that the defendant was not a "repeat offender. This situation might decrease the necessity of a sentence primarily centered on incapacitation. But mitigating factors which favour a good record are less significant in the present instance because of the seriousness of the current offences. During the deliberation of the case in premeditated murder, the court will have to weigh in on the defendant's criminal background and the intentionality and finality of the crime. The defendant's behaviour in court during the trial is a factor in court assessment, but has less weight

than factors directly relevant to the crime. Judicial proceedings are to be conducted with respect to all parties and a lack of respectful behaviour is not to diminish the seriousness of intentional participation in a planned killing. Thus, this concern does not stand alone as basis for mitigation, but it could be used.

Proportionality of the 20-Year Sentence

The court, taking into consideration the aggravating and mitigating factors, finally imposed the fixed-term sentence of 20 years, which was the maximum fixed-term sentence allowed by Article 340. The sentence was more harsh than a normal fixed term sentence, but not as harsh as life sentence or death sentence. The status in the statute suggests that the court saw the crime as being deserving of the longest possible time sentence, but believed that the two more serious sentences were not warranted. The court said the severity of the planned killing and its impact outweighed the mitigating factors, giving him the 20-year sentence. These factors were lessened and, in part, negated by the defendants cooperation, remorse, respectful behaviour and absence of any previous convictions. Meanwhile, the court did not choose life imprisonment or the death penalty, indicating that the mitigating circumstances and the person involved's case still had some relevance. With respect to proportionality, the sentence should be commensurate with both the gravity of the offence that has been actually committed and the individual's actual involvement in the offence.

The judgement should detail the defendant's contribution and the reasons why this warranted the maximum fixed-term sentence because the defendant was convicted under Article 55. The legal consequences for a participant can be the same as those for a primary perpetrator, but it will need to be done on a case-by-case basis, highlighting the participant's role, intent, contribution, and culpability in the offense. Offences characterised as premeditated murder should not be accepted as justification for a maximum fixed-term sentence. That would mean that every Article 340 conviction would have the same sentence, leaving the alternatives in the statute and the individual sentencing considerations virtually irrelevant.

The court should therefore link the sentence(s) chosen to the facts of the case which show the seriousness of this defendant's part, the extent of planning and the extent to which the conduct was brutal and the harm suffered. The sentence was fair, adequate, reasoned, humane, proportionate and consistent with the level of fault of the defendant, the court said. This finding is based on the accepted aims of sentencing, which are to hold a person accountable, deter, protect society and rehabilitate. The use of these terms should be backed up with substance, however. A sentence does not necessarily qualify as proportionate just because the judge says so, but rather requires a linkage between the offence, the responsibility of the defendant, the circumstances and the penalty imposed.

Justice, Legal Certainty, and the Purpose of Punishment

There are legal functions of the application of Article 340. It helps to preserve the right to life, denounce intentional and planned lethal actions, establish a basis for the accountability of perpetrators, and ensures the public trust in the bodies that enforce criminal law. Meanwhile, sentencing must still be consistent with the requirements for human dignity and that punishment be applied in a way that is warranted by the culpability of the defendant. The judgment takes into account retributive, deterrent, protective and rehabilitative factors. The severity of the sentence demonstrates the condemnation of the offense and the desire to deter further offense. The long jail sentence serves to protect society by keeping the defendant locked up. It also adds a rehabilitative element with the court's acknowledgment of remorse and the potential for the defendant to improve.

This is an example of how punishment can go beyond revenge to be a multifaceted legal and social function. There are good reasons for the severity of punishment for premeditated murder: the need to protect life and ensure public order. However, general arguments of social good,

deterrence or justice should not obscure reasoning for a particular case. The punishment should not be based on the conduct and personal responsibility of any defendant. The purpose of this requirement is to guarantee that criminal sentences are enacted with legal predictability and do not rely heavily on public sentiment and moralising opinion (Ahmad et al., 2024; Lindgren, 2018). For legal certainty, statutory provisions have to be applied consistently and the sentence imposed is to be explained clearly.

The defendant, the victim, and society should be able to follow the reasoning of a court from the evidence that was presented to the court to the finding of guilty and from the finding of guilty to the chosen punishment. This transparency also allows the possibility for academic and judicial review of whether other cases are handled similarly. The balance should be wider for Justice. It involves the recognition of the victim's right to life and the family's suffering, as well as the defendant's right to be punished only in the event of proven guilt and the individual's responsibility. A just judgement cannot therefore be slack or hard on him. Here, the court tried to find that balance by setting the maximum fixed term sentence, but refused to impose life sentence or death.

Legal Implications of the Decision

The decision also has repercussions for the law. Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT shows that if the participation of a person in a jointly committed premeditated murder is established as intentional and the criminal responsibility of that person, then the severe sanctions provided by Article 340 is applicable. The ruling upholds the law that participation does not equal a reduction of responsibility. If the evidence shows a conscious participation in the common plan and execution, a participant can be held responsible for the completed offence. The ruling also underscores the need to distinguish between the steps in a legal analysis. The court needs to find the objective aspects of the crime, the defendant's intent and involvement, capacity to be held liable for a crime, justification for the crime, and sentence. The lack of relationality between these steps will mask the capacity of guilt and punishment to have been properly set up.

The analysed decision remains relevant to the understanding of how Article 340 was applied by the court, as there is a novel question of whether premeditated murder can be committed without the use of a gun. Though the question of premeditated murder has been dealt with in the context of the old Criminal Code, the analysed decision remains relevant to the understanding of the application of Article 340 by the court. Its general utility is that it shows the link between previous planning, involvement, responsibility and punishment. However, this decision cannot be seen as a universal sentencing formula. Its meaning needs to be appreciated in the context of the evidence it relies on, the part played by the defendant and the factors that the panel takes into account. The results of this research show that the legal determination of criminal responsibility for premeditated murder is built on the interaction between the elements of the offence, the guilt of the defendant, the existence of evidence of previous planning and the sentences imposed by the courts.

Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT acknowledges that the first step is merely establishing that a killing occurred, but it is only a small part of the legal investigation. The court shall also find that the defendant was deliberate, knew about a previous plan, had the mental capacity to be held responsible and was not entitled to a justification/excuse. This is in line with earlier decision-based research which places emphasis on the importance of prior planning as the key distinction between premeditated and ordinary murder. Previous studies have found that the responsibility of the criminal for the commission of an offense in accordance with the provisions of Article 340 is influenced by the court's ability to prove that the defendant acted with the intent and preparation to commit the offense (Armelia et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2024; Djiwa et al., 2025).

The case at hand confirms this general stance, with an additional question arising regarding joint participation. The defendant was not only convicted as a perpetrator of the whole offence on his own, but also as someone who was conscious of participating in a plan that was executed

jointly by him and others under Article 55 paragraph (1) (1). The fact that the offence is joint introduces an extra analytical requirement. Where there is only one perpetrator, the evidence could directly link the defendant's planning, preparation and execution. With a jointly committed offence, however, the court will have to decide whether there was a common plan and what role the individual participant played in it. More than one person at a scene does not mean that they intended to act together, and simply knowing what someone else plans to do does not mean that the other person was actually taking part in the action.

The court needs to determine what the defendant did and prove it was in furtherance of the common criminal purpose. This extends the findings of previous studies which have concentrated largely on interpretation of motive and premeditation. Rauzi et al (2023) highlighted the evidentiary function of motive in premeditated murder and Christine et al. (2025) discussed its function in punishment. Similarly, Laia et al. (2025) studied the proof of motive in such instances. These studies are relevant because of the fact that motive can give a context to why a crime was committed. But the present analysis agrees that motive is not a constitutive element or evidence for the absence of prior planning.

In Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN. Although SIT may be an explanation for the background of the offence, the premeditation must be demonstrated through some evidence of preparation, co-ordination, reflection and execution. A motive may not require prior planning and a planned killing may be done for a motive that is not fully formed at trial. Therefore, the analytical order must start with the statutory elements and evidence followed by the motive which has the role of contextualising and not fixing responsibility for the crime.

The results also confirm the need to keep the distinction between intention and prior planning. Both are subjective, and they're looking at different legal questions. Intention is whether the defendant intended or willed the lethal consequence. In cases of prior planning, the question is whether that desire was premeditated and whether the defendant had the chance to think before he acted. Research on the elements of proof of intention has focused on witness evidence, physical evidence, attack method and the defendant's actions (Putra et al., 2025). Studies on the forensic science of evidence have also demonstrated the role of objective evidence in helping to reconstruct the mechanism and context of an intentional murder (Liana et al., 2024).

The physical evidence in the current case evidence was consistent with the reconstruction of the offence but this was not, by itself, sufficient to prove the defendant's mental state. The weapons were related to the violent acts and potential fatality, and the mobile telephones and motorcycles could be used as a means of communication and transportation. Their value would depend on the nature of the testimony, the defendant's statements, and the chronology embraced by the court. This means that the evidence of premeditation must be cumulative and relate to a group of objects or a series of statements and not just one isolated object or one isolated statement.

The court's use of the defendant's admission also aligns with research highlighting the benefits and dangers of confession evidence. An admission can bolster the case of the prosecution, especially if it is detailed and substantiated. It does not, however, remove the requirement to establish the offence in some other legally permissible way. Confessions can be contaminated, suggested, pressured or reconstructed incorrectly (Leo et al., 2012; Alceste et al., 2020; Welner et al., 2025). The present case refrained from relying completely on the defendant's admission, instead combining it with witness evidence and physical evidence.

However, it is important to note the difference between admission of participation and admission of prior planning. The defendant can agree to be present and be involved in violence without admitting that the violence was pre-planned. The court, therefore, must decide whether the admission included knowledge of the plan, agreement with the common purpose, and assistance in the implementation of the plan. Such a requirement is particularly important when the defendant is charged under the doctrine of participation.

The results are consistent with studies that have sought to explain that a mental disorder might not exclude criminal responsibility unless it affects the defendant's ability to comprehend or self-regulate. Putri and Waluyo (2024); Jauhari et al. (2025) underscored the significance of determining the defendant's psychological capability and not presuming it based on the commission of the offence. Crocker et al. (2015) and Charette et al. (2015) also demonstrate the need to closely examine the connection between the mental disorder and the criminal act to establish non-responsibility.

In the court's decision discussed, the court found no evidence of a mental condition that would have removed the defendant's capacity. He knew what was happening, confessed his actions, felt sorry and had understood the implications. The situation facilitated the blame shifting. But the analysis also revealed that age and physical health cannot be accepted as a standalone indication of mental ability. What is relevant is if the defendant had the intellectual and volitional capacity to act at the time of the offence.

This was also a distinction from cases where the ingredients of a crime are made a legal issue, but where it is not possible to impose punishment. This discovery would uphold the principle of criminal responsibility, namely, that for a person to be held criminally responsible, he must be guilty, have the capacity to be guilty, and not have any legal excuse to be exempt. It is in keeping with the general concept of responsibility as a shift from objective misdeeds to subjective blame (Lacey & Pickard, 2015; Darley, 2009).

The sentencing findings align with other research that has found that the Article 340 sanctions are harsh given that the sentencing action is planned beforehand (Pahlepi et al., 2024; Beno et al., 2020; Agusta et al., 2025). In the present case, however, it has also been shown that premeditated murder does not always lead to a death sentence or life imprisonment. There were a number of aggravating and mitigating factors taken into account and the court chose the maximum fixed-term sentence.

This is based on the concept of individualised sentencing. The severity of the conduct, and the victim's family's suffering, meant that harsh punishment was warranted, while the defendant's admission and remorse, his exemplary conduct and his null previous convictions constituted mitigating factors. The sentence was thus a compromise between the gravity of the offence and the individual circumstances of the defendant and not in accordance with the statutory classification of offences.

However, a strong explanation of the defendant's individual role is required to justify the maximum sentence for fixed term. The proportionality test should seek to establish whether the defendant was responsible for initiating the plan, preparing the instruments, coordinating with the other perpetrators or directly executing the attack, or making another significant contribution to the act. It is not easy to judge if the same sentence would also be suitable for other participants at various levels of engagement if they were not explained with a role-specific perspective.

The requirement for individualized thinking resonates with sentencing scholarship which cautions against imposing harsh sentences based on how they classify offenses. Punishment should take into account the role, culpability, personal circumstances and rehabilitative potential of the offender, even in the case of the most serious of criminal acts (Szydło, 2015; Surendranath & Misra, 2024; Blick, 2023). The present ruling considered these factors by using aggravating and mitigating factors, but this would be strengthened with a greater explication of how each of these factors impacted the choice for 20 years instead of life imprisonment or death penalty.

The decision also highlights the connection between legal certainty and substantive justice. The use of Article 340 with Article 55 paragraph (1) (1) provided for legal certainty for the conduct of a considered legally and convincingly proven. Substantive justice demanded that the court consider the defendant's personal guilt and that they punish him fairly for his crime. These principles are designed to work together: legal certainty to guard against any arbitrary use of

criminal provisions and justice to guard against the punishment being a purely mechanical result of classification.

The main contribution of this study is that by examining the case of the jointly committed pre-meditated murder, it illustrates the fact that Article 340 cannot be used to determine criminal responsibility. It calls for an integrated approach to uphold Article 340 along with Article 55 with evidence of a previous plan and the defendant's conscious will to join the plan. Therefore, the findings are not only a general account of premeditated murder, but also a description of the necessary element of the selected decision, namely participation.

The study also proves that physical evidence and witness testimony should be analysed based on the particular legal element it is used to prove, and that the defendant's admission should be analysed based on the specific legal element it is given in relation to. Weapons and the manner of attack may be used to establish intention and causation, communications and transportation may be used to establish coordination, testimony may be used to establish chronology and participation, and the defendant's statement may be used to establish knowledge and culpability. A single body can be used instead of more than one because you might not be able to tell if it has been proven or not.

Generally speaking, Decision No. 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT is generally consistent with the accepted legal definition of "premeditated murder." The defendant was found to be capable of responsibility, had been a part of a joint planning for the killing and was unprotected by any justification or excuse. The 20 year sentence was within the statutory limit and was a reflection of the balancing of aggravating and mitigating circumstances by the court. The case, however, does emphasize the importance of courts and legal scholars giving a more clear account of the timing of planning, the role played by the defendant, and the evidentiary connection between planning, participation, and previous preparations. The precision is required to be able to prove a legal analysis, as opposed to a serious outcome.

CONCLUSION

This study is proving that the existence of criminal liability in a premeditated killing case as analysed in Decision Number 174/PID.B/2023/PN.SIT is very dependent on evidence of intention and careful planning. The killing of a person with premeditation, that is, with intention, is covered by Article 340 of the Criminal Code which prescribes very high punishments, including the death penalty. Judges are expected to gather objective and subjective evidence to reach a fair verdict in the evidentiary process; analysis of the elements of intent and planning is crucial. Considering the mental state of the perpetrator and the motive of the offense, the application of the laws in this case illustrates balance and certainty of justice. In conclusion, this study has confirmed that criminal law enforcement need to look at all the existing aspects; starting from morality, societal values, for the aim of achieving true justice in the case of a premeditated murder.

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