

PUBLIC

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Further information on EXTRA 103/98 (AMR 51/115/98, 21 December 1998) - Death Penalty / Legal Concern

USA (South Carolina) Joseph (Joe) Ernest ATKINS, aged 51

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Joseph Ernest Atkins was executed as scheduled in South Carolina on 22 January 1999. He was sentenced to death for the murder of his adoptive father and a young girl in his home town of North Charleston in 1985.

The new Governor, Jim Hodges, who took office earlier in January, denied clemency after viewing Atkins's videotaped statement in which the prisoner said he would gladly die if his death would bring back his two victims.

Joseph Atkins offered no final statement in the death chamber, and no relatives attended the execution, which was carried out by lethal injection.

Joseph Atkins becomes the second inmate in South Carolina to be put to death this year, and the 22nd overall since the state resumed executions in 1985. He was the sixth inmate executed in the past seven weeks in South Carolina.

Atkins also becomes the ninth condemned inmate to be put to death in the USA this year, and the 509th overall since executions resumed in 1977.

No further action by the UA Network is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.