

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

**AI Index: AMR 51/98/95
Distr: UA/SC**

EXTRA 86/95

Death Penalty

24 July 1995

USA (Texas)

Vernon SATTIEWHITE

Vernon Sattiewhite, black, is scheduled to be executed in Texas on 15 August 1995. He was sentenced to death for murder.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel or degrading punishment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is deeply concerned at the number of executions being carried out in the USA in general, and in Texas in particular. Of the 289 executions carried out in the USA since the death penalty was resumed in the mid 1970s, 97 have been carried out in Texas. The method of execution is lethal injection.

In Texas the governor may commute a sentence of death only if he receives a favourable recommendation from the Board of Pardons and Paroles. The Board consistently refuses to hold full clemency hearings in death penalty cases, and apart from a number of commutations granted in the 1980s as the result of two key court rulings, the Board has never recommended clemency in any death penalty case in recent years.

As of 30 April 1995 there were 398 prisoners under sentence of death in Texas. The most recent person to be executed in Texas was Karl Hammond, on 21 June 1995.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please telephone or send telegrams, faxes in English if possible:

- expressing deep concern that Vernon Sattiewhite is scheduled to be executed in Texas;
- urging the Board to recommend that Governor Bush grant clemency to Vernon Sattiewhite;
- expressing concern and sympathy for the families and friends of the victims of violent crime;
- expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases.

APPEALS TO:

Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles
Executive Clemency Unit
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Pardons and Paroles Division
PO Box 13401
Austin, TX 78711, USA

Faxes: + 1 512 467 0945

Telephone: +1 512 406 5852

Telegrams: Pardons and Paroles Board, Austin, Texas

Salutation: Dear Board Members

COPIES TO:

2

Governor of Texas

The Honourable George W. Bush
Office of the Governor
PO Box 12428, Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711, USA

Faxes: +1 512 463 1849

Salutation: Dear Governor

Austin-American Statesman

The Letters Editor
Box 670

Austin, TX 78767, USA

Faxes: +1 512 445 3679

and to diplomatic representatives of the USA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.