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**NEWS FLASH**

**USA**

**Supreme Court's refusal to consider  
the international ban on the death penalty against  
children**

“It is extraordinary that at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the USA is still clinging to this punishment for children,” Amnesty International said today, as the US Supreme Court refused to consider whether US states are forbidden by international law from executing people for crimes committed as children.

“The Supreme Court has missed a golden opportunity to bring the USA into line with the rest of the world on this fundamental human rights issue.”

“Instead it will have deepened the perception that the USA is a country which proclaims itself the world's most progressive force for human rights, yet picks and chooses its way through international human rights standards to suit itself.”

The Court's ruling came in the case of *Domingues v Nevada*. Michael Domingues is on death row in Nevada for capital murder committed when he was 16. His lawyers have challenged his death sentence on the grounds that it violates US obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and customary international law. The Court ruled today that it will not consider that appeal.

The Court's decision comes less than a month after the US government filed an appeal with the Court urging it not to examine the Domingues claim. The Court last looked at the issue of the minimum age for the death penalty in 1989, when it ruled that US “standards of decency” allowed the execution of 16- and 17-year-old offenders.

The USA has carried out the only four known executions of child offenders -- prisoners convicted of crimes committed when they were under 18 -- in the past two years. In the past decade the USA has executed more child offenders than the rest of the world combined. There are some 70 such prisoners on death row in 16 US states.

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**For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London,  
UK, on 44 171 413 5566 or visit our website at <http://www.amnesty.org>**

