

234/99

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**Media Advisory
USA**

Three child offenders scheduled for execution in January
A new Amnesty International report

“I don’t think we should be proud of the fact that the United States is the world leader in the execution of child offenders.” US Senator Russ Feingold, 11 November 1999

A new Amnesty International report shows how the USA is set to open the 21st century with a triple human rights violation of a type which almost every other country has consigned to history: the execution of child offenders.

Three prisoners in their 20s are facing execution in January 2000 for murders committed when they were children. All were 17 years old at the time of the crimes for which they are scheduled to die, making their executions a blatant violation of international law, which bans the use of the death penalty against child offenders – those under age 18 at the time of their crimes.

The report highlights how:

- the USA has earned the shameful distinction of leading a dwindling group of states that commit this particular human rights violation. Only five other countries are known to have executed child offenders since 1990. One of them, Yemen, has since outlawed this practice, as has China, the country with the highest annual judicial death toll.
- the USA has executed 10 child offenders in the past decade, more than the other five countries combined. All four child offenders known to have been put to death in the world since October 1997 were killed in the USA. Such statistics alone give the lie to claims that the USA is a paragon of respect for human rights and international standards.

the typical condemned teenager is not a youngster from a stable background, but a mentally impaired or disturbed adolescent emerging from a childhood of abuse and poverty. Just a glimpse at the backgrounds of the child offenders executed in the USA since 1990 suggests that society had failed them well before it decided to kill them.

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For more information or to request a copy of the report, please call Amnesty International's press office in London on +44 171 413 5566. Website <http://www.amnesty.org>