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St Kitts and Nevis: First hanging in 13 years -a backward step for the Caribbean

Amnesty International was appalled to learn that the first hanging since 1985 took place in St Kitts and Nevis today.

The human rights organization warned that other countries in the English-Speaking Caribbean may follow suit, particularly in the light of the fact that some countries in the region have recently taken steps to make it easier and quicker to carry out executions by withdrawing from international treaties and organizations.

David Wilson was convicted of murder in February 1996, along with another man, Clement Thomas. They had reportedly beaten a security guard to death in 1994.

"What is alarming is that the execution of David Wilson took place despite the fact that he had not yet appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) which acts as the final court of appeal for St Kitts and other Caribbean Commonwealth states," Amnesty International said today.

"While we express the utmost sympathy for the victims of violent crime, the use of the death penalty never serves any valid purpose but merely brutalizes the society which uses it".

Amnesty International is concerned that further death warrants may be issued and is calling on the Government of St Kitts to commute all death sentences immediately.

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, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

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