

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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**EXTRA 92/92**

**Death Penalty**

**4 November 1992**

**REPUBLIC OF LATVIA:**

**Andres SERGUNTS**

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Amnesty International is concerned that Andres Sergunts may soon be executed.

He was sentenced to death on 6 July 1992 on two counts of premeditated murder under aggravating circumstances. His appeal was rejected on 20 October and no judicial review of the sentence was ordered. It is believed that Andres Sergunts has submitted a petition for clemency. This is the only way in which the death sentence passed on him can now be commuted.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

On 5 February 1992 the Supreme Council of Latvia reduced the number of crimes which carry the death penalty to seven. Amnesty International has recently learned that five people have been sentenced to death this year. Two people have had their sentences commuted. The organization is appealing on behalf of the three remaining prisoners, including Andres Sergunts. Amnesty International has also learned that two executions (not one as previously thought) have taken place this year - one in January and one in May. The organization had previously appealed to the authorities for commutation of the sentence passed in this second case.

A petition for clemency is submitted to the Presidium of the Supreme Council.

The petition is examined by the Human Rights Commission of the Supreme Council which then makes its recommendation. The Procurator General and Chairman of the Supreme Court are also consulted by the Presidium of the Supreme Council for their opinions on the case.

Procedures for executions are laid down in joint instructions issued by the Minister of the Interior and the Procurator General. They are not made public.

However, in October 1992 during a research mission to the Republic of Latvia Amnesty International was informed by the First Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs that executions are carried out in the investigative isolation unit of Riga Central Prison, usually within 24 hours after the petition for clemency has been rejected. The condemned person is called out from his cell during the night and is shot by a single marksman (not by a firing squad as previously believed).

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 or degrading treatment or punishment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail**

**letters in English, French or German or in your own language:**

- appealing for commutation of the death sentence passed on Andres Sergunts;
- explaining Amnesty International's opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances without exception;
- urging that the authorities in the Republic of Latvia stop carrying out further executions and appealing for them to consider complete abolition of the death penalty.

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**APPEALS TO:**

1. The Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia:

Anatolijs Gorbunovs  
Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council  
Jekaba 11  
Riga 226811  
Republic of Latvia  
**Telegrams: Chairman Supreme Council, Riga, Latvia**  
**Telephone: + 7 0132 322938**  
**Faxes: + 7 0132 211611**

**Salutation: Dear Chairman**

2. Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights of the Supreme Council of Latvia:

Andrejs Pantelejevs  
Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights  
Jekaba 11  
Riga 226811  
Republic of Latvia  
**Telegrams: Chairman, Commission on Human Rights, Supreme Council, Riga, Latvia**  
**Telephone: + 7 0132 325868**  
**Faxes: + 7 0132 211611**  
**Telexes: 161148 SU**

**Salutation: Dear Chairman**

3. Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Latvia:

Gvido Zemribo  
Chairman of the Supreme Court  
Brivibas bulvaris 34  
Riga 226616  
Republic of Latvia  
**Telegrams: Chairman, Supreme Court, Riga, Latvia**  
**Telephone: + 7 0132 289434**  
**Faxes: + 7 0132 213978**

**Salutation: Dear Chairman**

4. The Procurator General of the Republic of Latvia:

Janis Skrastins  
Procurator General

Komunaru bulvaris 6  
Riga 226150  
Republic of Latvia  
**Telegrams: Procurator General, Riga, Latvia**  
**Telephone: + 7 0132 320085**

**Salutation: Dear Procurator General**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:** diplomatic representatives of the Republic of Latvia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat or your Section Office if sending appeals after 16 December 1992.