

URGENT ACTION

IDAHO CARRIES OUT FIRST EXECUTION SINCE 1994

On the morning of 18 November, the US state of Idaho carried out its first execution in 17 years, and only its second since 1957. Paul Rhoades, aged 54, was put to death by lethal injection after more than two decades on death row.

Paul Rhoades, then 30, was arrested on 25 March 1987 and charged with three separate murders committed over the previous month. The victims were school teacher Susan Michelbacher and convenience store clerks Stacy Baldwin (f) and Nolan Haddon (m). After separate trials for the murders of Stacy Baldwin and Susan Michelbacher, Paul Rhoades was sentenced to death in each case. For the murder of Nolan Haddon, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The Idaho Commission of Pardons and Parole denied Paul Rhoades's request for a clemency hearing and passed its recommendation against clemency to Governor Otter. The condemned man's lawyers continued to seek a stay of execution in the courts, challenging Idaho's lethal injection procedures. The US Supreme Court denied the final appeal on 17 November.

The media reported that Governor Otter had been "flooded" with appeals to prevent the execution. Among the senders were the European Union, the Vatican and the Swiss government.

About 100 people demonstrated outside the prison in opposition to the execution.

The execution went ahead about an hour after its original scheduled time, after a delay while a state judge considered, and then rejected, another motion on the case. The Idaho Department of Corrections issued a statement that it had carried out "the court-order death warrants issued against Paul Ezra Rhoades" and that the condemned man had been pronounced dead at 9.15am, local time.

After the execution, Governor Otter released a statement saying: "My thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their loved ones, the mother of Paul Ezra Rhoades and everyone who has been impacted by these crimes. Mr. Rhoades took full and unfettered advantage of his right to due process of law for more than twenty years. That process has run its course and Mr. Rhoades has been held accountable for his actions. The State of Idaho has done its best to fulfil this most solemn responsibility with respect, professionalism and most of all dignity for everyone involved."

There have been 43 executions in the USA this year, and 1,277 since judicial killing resumed there in 1977.

No further action is requested from the UA Network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the first update of UA 325/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR51/089/2011/en>

Name: Paul Ezra Rhoades
Gender m/f: male

Further information on UA: 325/11 Index: AMR 51/095/2011 Issue Date: 21 November 2011

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