

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 51/28/97

2 June 1997

Further information (2) on EXTRA 81/96 (AMR 51/44/96, 29 May 1996) and follow-up (AMR 51/46/96, 7 June 1996) - Death Penalty

USA (MARYLAND) Flint Gregory HUNT

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Flint Gregory Hunt, black, is scheduled to be executed by the state of Maryland on 30 June 1997. He was sentenced to death for the murder of police officer Vincent J Adolfo in November 1985.

The last prisoner executed in Maryland was John Thanos, white, who had chosen to abandon his legal appeals and allow the state to execute him on 17 May 1994.

Amnesty International is extremely concerned at the racial disparity in the application of the death penalty in Maryland. Of the 17 prisoners currently under sentence of death in the state, 14 belong to ethnic minorities. In the summer of 1996, Governor Parris Glendening appointed a task force to look into the racial disparity of the use of capital punishment. However, the resources and the period of time allowed by Governor Glendening for completion of the study were criticised by members of Maryland's legal community. The report was published in December but was inconclusive in its findings, stating that *"there was insufficient time to conduct a definitive study on the issue of capital punishment"* and that *"this Task Force was unable to produce a conclusive answer to the issue of the cause of racial disparity in the capital punishment process"*. The Task Force found *"that the high percentage of African-American prisoners under sentence of death and that the low percentage of prisoners under sentence of death whose victims were African-Americans remains a cause for concern."* Five of the victims of those on Maryland's death row were black and 17 were white.

The Task Force recommended that a longer, more comprehensive study take place on the racial disparity in the use of the death penalty in Maryland.

Hunt's scheduled execution of 10 June 1996 was stayed by the Maryland Supreme Court. However, even when the execution was no longer scheduled to go ahead, Governor Glendening still chose to consider Hunt's clemency petition, which he then denied.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or in your own language:**

To the Governor

- urging that Governor Glendening reverse his decision and grant clemency to Flint Gregory Hunt;
- expressing concern that Flint Gregory Hunt, a black man, is facing execution on 30 June despite the conclusion of the Governor's own Task Force's that there is cause for concern at the racial disparity in the use of capital punishment in Maryland;
- urging Governor Glendening to implement the Task Force's recommendation for a more comprehensive study on the use of capital punishment in Maryland;
- urging a moratorium on executions in Maryland until the findings of the study have been published and its recommendations implemented;
- expressing sympathy for the victims of violent crimes and their families.

To the Attorney General

- expressing concern at the racial disparity in the application of the death penalty in Maryland;
- urging that he support the recommendation of the Governor's Task Force for a further, more comprehensive study of the use of capital punishment in Maryland;
- urging that he cease to actively arrange execution dates for those on Maryland's death row until the completion of a further study and the implementation of its recommendations.

**APPEALS TO:**

The Honorable Parris Glendening  
Governor of Maryland  
State House  
Annapolis, MD 21401, USA  
**Telephone: +1 410 974 3901**  
**Fax: +1 410 974 3275**  
**Telegrams: Governor Glendening, Annapolis, Maryland, USA**  
**Salutation: Dear Governor**

The Honorable J. Joseph Curren  
Attorney General of Maryland  
Office of the Attorney General  
200 St. Paul Place  
Baltimore, MD 21202-2202, USA  
**Telephone: +1 410 576 6300**  
**Fax: +1 410 576 7003**  
**Telegrams: Attorney General Curren, Baltimore, Maryland, USA**  
**Salutation: Dear Attorney General**

and to diplomatic representatives of USA accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 June 1997.