

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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**EXTRA 08/93**

**Death Penalty**

**26 January 1993**

**USA (Texas):**

**Samuel HAWKINS**

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Samuel Hawkins is scheduled to be executed by the state of Texas on 10 February 1993.

Samuel Hawkins, black, now aged 49, was sentenced to death in March 1978 for the rape and murder of a white woman.

Texas has executed 54 prisoners since 1982 - more than any other US state. The most recent execution was that of Kevin Lincecum on 9 December 1992. The method of execution is lethal injection.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Research conducted in different countries has failed to reveal convincing evidence that the death penalty deters serious crime more effectively than other punishments. No decline in homicides has been identifiable in those US states which now execute prisoners on a regular basis. Crime statistics issued in Texas in April 1992 revealed that 1991 was the most violent in Texas history, with a record number of homicides (11 percent more than in 1990) and a 12.7 percent increase in violent crime. Five prisoners were executed by the state in 1991 and 12 in 1992.

Clemency has not been granted to any prisoner under sentence of death in Texas since the death penalty was reintroduced there in the mid 1970s. Under Texas' clemency rules, the governor may commute a death sentence only if she receives a favourable recommendation from a majority of the 18-member Board of Pardons and Paroles. The Board has convened only rarely to consider petitions for clemency (to Amnesty International's knowledge, the Board met once in 1987, and once in 1992). Their reluctance to hold full clemency hearings is a matter of great concern to Amnesty International.

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

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/telephone calls/faxes/express and airmail letters in English if possible:**

- urging the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles to convene a clemency hearing to consider the case of Samuel Hawkins;

- asking the Board to recommend that Governor Richards grant clemency to Samuel Hawkins by commuting his death sentence;
- expressing deep concern at the increasing numbers of executions being scheduled in Texas, and at the state's high rate of executions;
- stressing that the death penalty has not been shown to deter violent crime more effectively than other punishments; refer to the alarming increase in violent crime in Texas in 1991 despite its regular use of the death penalty;

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- referring to Amnesty International's findings that the death penalty in the USA is both arbitrary and discriminatory in its application: studies have consistently shown that those convicted of murdering white victims are far more likely to be sentenced to death than other offenders;
- urging the state to consider alternative punishments that would be more in keeping with the principles and values of a civilized society.

**APPEALS TO**

1) Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles  
8610 Shoal Creek Boulevard, PO Box 13401  
Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711-3401  
USA

**Telegrams: Texas Board Pardons/Paroles, Austin, TX 78711, USA**  
**Faxes: + 1 512 467 0945**  
**Telephone: + 1 512 406 5852**

**Salutation: Dear Board Members**

2) Mr Jack D Kyle  
Chairman  
Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles  
2503 Lake Road, Ste 9  
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USA

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**Telephone: + 1 409 291 2161**  
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**Salutation: Dear Mr Kyle**

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to diplomatic representatives of the USA accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY, TO ARRIVE IN TEXAS BY 10 FEBRUARY 1993.**