

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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EXTRA 41/92

Death Penalty

7 April 1992

USA (Texas):

Seven executions scheduled in 15 day period

Seven executions have been scheduled within a 15 day period in Texas. One execution is due to take place on Easter Sunday. This is one of the largest number of dates set by a single state within a 15 day period since the death penalty was reintroduced by US states in the mid-1970s. It is feared that these executions will take place as scheduled. Those due to be executed are:

Leonel HERRERA

Hispanic, on 15 April (see Further Information on EXTRA 50/91, AMR 51/45/92, 31 March 1992)

Benjamin BOYLE

White, on 16 April (sentenced on 30 October 1986 for the murder of a white woman);

David GIBBS

White, on Easter Sunday, 19 April (sentenced on 20 March 1986 for the murder of a white woman);

Billy WHITE

Black, on 23 April (sentenced on 25 October 1977 for the murder of a white woman);

Harold LANE

White, on 24 April (sentenced on 11 May 1983 for the murder of a white woman);

Lester BOWER

White, on 29 April (sentenced on 28 April 1984 for the murder of four white male victims);

Delma BANKS

Black, on 30 April (see Further Information on EXTRA 25/92, AMR 51/40/92, 17 March 1992).

Amnesty International has no further information about Boyle, Gibbs, White, Lane or Bower. The organization is deeply concerned at the increasing number of execution dates being set and the high rate of executions in Texas.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Texas leads the nation in death sentencing and executions. At the beginning of 1991 there were 345 prisoners under sentence of death. Forty-six prisoners

have been executed since 1982 - nearly twice as many as any other US state. Texas has executed four prisoners so far in 1992, the most recent being Edward Ellis on 3 March. The method of execution is lethal injection.

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.

Page 2 of EXTRA 41/92

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/telephone calls/express and airmail letters:

- urging the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles to convene clemency hearings to consider the cases of Benjamin Boyle, David Gibbs, Billy White, Harold Lane and Lester Bower;

- asking the Board to recommend that Governor Richards grant clemency to each of these prisoners by commuting their death sentences;

- expressing deep concern at the increasing numbers of executions being scheduled in Texas, and at the state's high rate of executions;

- urging the state to consider alternative punishments that would be more in keeping with the principles and values of a civilized society.

APPEALS TO

Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles
8610 Shoal Creek Boulevard, PO Box 13401
Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78758-6887
USA

Dear Board Members

Telegrams: Texas Board Pardons/Paroles, Austin, TX 78711, USA
Telephone: +1 512 459 2782
Faxes: +1 512 459 2790 or 406 5231

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

The Honorable Ann Richards
Governor of Texas
Office of the Governor
PO Box 12428, Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711
USA

Faxes: +1 512 463 1849

AND TO THE LETTERS EDITORS OF THE FOLLOWING TEXAS NEWSPAPERS:

Austin American-Statesman
Box 670
Austin, TX 78767
USA
Faxes: +1 512 445 3679

Houston Chronicle

801 Texas Avenue
Houston, TX 77002
USA

Faxes: +1 713 220 7868

and to diplomatic representatives of the USA in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 April 1992.