

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Penalty

17 November 1992

USA (Virginia):

Timothy BUNCH

Timothy Bunch is scheduled to be executed in Virginia, USA, on 10 December 1992.

Timothy Bunch, white, was sentenced to death in November 1982 for the murder of Su Cha Thomas, female, in January 1982. Timothy Bunch received poor legal representation at his trial: the two court-appointed lawyers assigned to his case had never handled a capital case before. As a result of their lack of experience, they failed to present mitigating evidence about Timothy Bunch's background to the jury which sentenced him to death. This included information relating to his disturbed family background and his lack of any prior criminal record, or history of violence. The only person called to testify on his behalf at the sentencing phase of his trial was his mother, although, according to reports, there were many witnesses available to do so.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As of August 1992 there were 47 prisoners under sentence of death in Virginia.

Sixteen prisoners have been executed in the state since 1982, the most recent being Willie Leroy Jones, black, on 15 September 1992. The method of execution is electrocution. Governor Wilder has designated 7 to 11 December to be Human Rights Week in Virginia. 10 December is International Human Rights Day.

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

- urging Governor Wilder to grant clemency to Timothy Bunch by commuting his death sentence;

- expressing concern that Timothy Bunch was represented at his trial by two inexperienced attorneys;

- noting that the execution of Timothy Bunch is scheduled to take place in Virginia on International Human Rights Day;

- expressing Amnesty International's opposition to 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.

APPEALS TO

The Honorable L Douglas Wilder
Governor of Virginia
State Capitol
Richmond, VA 23219, USA

Telegrams: Governor Wilder, Richmond, VA 23219, USA

Telephone: +1 804 786 2211

Faxes: +1 804 786 3985

Salutation: Dear Governor

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and to diplomatic representatives of the USA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY, TO ARRIVE BY 10 DECEMBER 1992.