

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 97/92 (AFR 53/07/92, 23 March 1992) - Death Penalty

SOUTH AFRICA:Seventeen people under sentence of death (names not known)

On 27 March 1992 the South African government announced a temporary moratorium on executions in Pretoria. The Minister of Justice said that executions have been suspended until an interim bill of rights has been agreed between the government's representatives and other parties currently involved in negotiations over a new constitution. The likely time-frame for reaching agreement on issues relating to the bill of rights is not clear at this stage.

The Minister of Justice said that although the carrying out of executions is temporarily suspended, the courts will continue to impose death sentences where appropriate and the authorities will continue the legal process of considering clemency petitions on behalf of other prisoners who have exhausted all available avenues of appeal. The authorities have still not disclosed the names of the 17 prisoners whose clemency petitions have already been turned down. A further 257 prisoners remain under sentence of death in Pretoria.

No further action is requested at this stage. Thank you to all who participated in this action.