

To: Sections

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EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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EXTRA 58/91

Death Penalty

30 August 1991

USA (South Carolina):

Donald GASKINS

Donald Gaskins is scheduled to be executed in South Carolina on 6 September 1991. All available legal appeals have been exhausted and it is feared that the execution will be carried out as planned.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mr Gaskins, white, now aged 60, was sentenced to death on 26 March 1983 for the murder-for-hire of fellow death-row inmate, Rudolph Tyner, black, in September 1982. Mr Tyner had been convicted of the murder of a couple during a robbery in 1978; his murder was arranged by the victims' son, (who received an 8-year sentence for his part in the murder, but was released after less than three years). Mr Gaskins placed a bomb inside a radio which exploded, killing Mr Tyner.

As of 24 April 1991, there were 43 prisoners under sentence of death in South Carolina. The last person to be executed in the state was Ronald (Rusty) Woomer on 27 April 1990. The method of execution is electrocution.

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.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/telephone calls/express and airmail letters (time permitting):

- urging Governor Campbell Jr to grant clemency to Donald Gaskins by commuting his death sentence.

APPEALS TO:

The Honourable Carrol A Campbell Jr
Governor of South Carolina
[Salutation: Dear Governor]
PO Box 11369
Columbia, SC 29211
USA

Telegrams: Governor Campbell, South Carolina, USA
Telexes: 0258 10666 2628 SC
Faxes: +(803) 734 1843
Telephone calls: +(803) 734 9818

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PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY, TO ARRIVE BY 5 SEPTEMBER 1991.