

**THE DEATH PENALTY**  
addenda and update to the  
Amnesty International report  
published 26 September 1979

The Amnesty International report *The Death Penalty* mainly concentrates on the period from 1973 to 1976. It also takes into account major trends up to the end of 1977.

The information contained in this addenda and update covers significant developments from the end of 1977 up to mid-1979. Mention is made only of countries in which Amnesty International is aware of changes in legislation affecting the death penalty, or new patterns in its use.

***International and regional initiatives***

On 8 April 1979 the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International cabled United Nations Secretary General Dr Kurt Waldheim requesting him to convene an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council to halt the resurgence of executions and political killings throughout the world. At the same time Amnesty International publicly called for an international moratorium on executions.

Thomas Hammarberg, Chairperson of the organization's International Executive Committee, stated: "We are urging the UN Security Council to take emergency action for two reasons. We want the death toll to stop. And we are appalled by the fact that death sentences have been carried out or handed down in the face of an unprecedented expression of world opinion on behalf of the victims."

"We unequivocally condemn each death sentence and each killing as a denial of the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," he said.

The Amnesty International statement drew attention to people in 12 countries who had been sentenced to death, executed, assassinated or found dead in the previous week. The dead included the former Prime Ministers of Iran and Pakistan, 10 political prisoners in Mozambique, five blacks in South Africa, five Nigerians, and individuals executed in Trinidad, the Soviet Union and the United States of America.

Amnesty International said it also opposed political murders committed by government agencies or opposition groups. Recent victims of political murders had included:

— British member of parliament Airey Neave, the Conservative Party spokesman

on Northern Ireland, who was assassinated by a bomb in his car at the House of Commons in London;

- Salvadorean industrialist Ernesto Liebes, the Honorary Consul of Israel, killed by the guerrilla organization FARN in El Salvador;
- a Guatemalan trade union leader and four other victims of assassination whose bodies were found in Guatemala City on 6 April. All the corpses bore marks of torture and knife wounds.

#### Council of Europe

Since the writing of the Amnesty International report, there have been significant trends within the Council of Europe towards complete abolition of the death penalty throughout the European Community. During the meeting of the Council's Legal Affairs Committee in June 1979, a Swedish member of parliament, Carl Lidbom, submitted a report recommending that the Council take a stand on the issue of the death penalty. No vote was taken at the meeting but after the discussion the committee chairman, British member of parliament, Percy Grieve, said that "there had been a clear majority for abolition".

The Legal Affairs Committee will meet again in September 1979 and is expected to prepare a draft resolution on the question of the death penalty for submission to the Parliamentary Assembly meeting in October.

During the past 10 years the death penalty has been completely abolished in Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and abolished for peace time offences in Malta, Spain and Switzerland. To Amnesty International's knowledge the death penalty has not been re-introduced in any country of Western Europe except Belgium where the number of offences punishable by death has been increased. The practice of executions in Western Europe shows a similar downward trend and is now limited to only three countries: France, Greece and Turkey.

#### Afghanistan (the Democratic Republic of)

On 27 April 1978, the People's Democratic Party government led by President Noor Mohammad Taraki came to power through a takeover in which several hundred people died. Sardar Mohammed Daud, who had been President of Afghanistan since 1973, and 16 members of his family were killed during these events. Kabul Radio announced that Sayed Abdullah (the Vice President), Ghulam Haider Rasooli (the Defence Minister), Abdul Kadir Nuristani (the Minister of the Interior) and General Mohammed Musa (Chief of the Air Force), had been executed in the days following the government takeover. Three more army officials, General Abdul Khaliq, General Rokay Soleiman and General Yahya Nawrooz were reported to have been summarily executed in the Ministry of Defence on 28 April 1978. Amnesty International has also been reliably informed that Wahid Abdullah, (former Minister of Foreign Affairs), was executed on or around 30 April 1978. As far as Amnesty International is aware, none of those executed in the days following the 27 April 1978 government takeover had been tried by a court of law.

In Afghanistan the death penalty cannot be imposed for criminal offences.

However, there have been several reports in the international press quoting opposition sources as stating that, in late 1978 and early 1979 "scores of political prisoners" were being summarily executed by firing squad, after having been taken away from Kabul prisons (*Sunday Telegraph*, London, 4 January 1979).

Amnesty International has not been able to assess whether such general reports are accurate. However, Amnesty International has the names of more than 10 political prisoners whom it believes have been killed or summarily executed without any form of trial while in the custody of the government. Among them are a former Minister of Justice in President Daud's government, a Professor of Anthropology at Kabul University, and former Prime Minister Mohammed Moosa Shafiq, all of whom were arrested after 27 April 1978. Amnesty International has also received dozens of reports of family members of other political prisoners from whom no news has been received since their arrest last year, and whom family members fear to have been killed while in custody.

#### Angola (People's Republic of)

On at least three occasions in December 1978, Angolan radio announced that supporters of two opposition movements, UNITA (*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*) and FLEC (*Frente de Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda*), had been paraded at public rallies and sentenced to death by acclaim. On the first occasion, five alleged UNITA members were condemned to death by firing squad at a mass rally held in Lobito on 3 December 1978. A week later, other UNITA members were condemned at a rally in Huambo and in Cabinda a crowd sentenced a group of five FLEC supporters to be shot.

#### Argentina (the Republic of)

Although in Argentina the death penalty was re-introduced in 1976 (by decrees passed in March and June), it was never formally applied until March 1979, when a court sentenced to death by firing squad a man accused of a double murder. (In this case an appeal has been lodged.) This is the first death sentence to be officially imposed in Argentina since the 1930s; it concerns a *crime passionel* that has no political connotations.

#### China (People's Republic of)

New legislation was adopted on 1 July 1979 by the Fifth National People's Congress (China's parliament) which discussed and approved a revision of the laws for the first time since the 1960s. Article 43 of the new Criminal Law states: "the death penalty is imposed only for the most heinous crimes. In the case of an offender who should be given the death penalty, if immediate execution of the death penalty is not mandatory, a two-year reprieve may be pronounced simultaneously with the death sentence. . ." The new Law on Criminal Procedure also specifies that a death sentence shall be approved by the Supreme People's Court and carried out within seven days after the Supreme People's Court issues an order to that effect.

Commentaries published in the Chinese official press about the new legislation

stressed the importance of distinguishing between people who are "reactionary in political thinking" and those guilty of criminal acts, implying that the first category should not be executed. In connection with this, a woman named Zhang Zhixin, who was executed in 1975 on political grounds, was portrayed as a heroine in the Chinese media. Zhang Zhixin, who was 45 when she was executed, was arrested in 1969 for criticizing the former Defence Minister Lin Biao (who disappeared later in 1971) and the "gang of four". She was executed six years later for refusing to recant. The press stressed that "even if she was a 'counter-revolutionary', she did not murder anyone, she did not commit arson, nor did she incite or organize people to make trouble . . . what she did . . . was honestly express her political viewpoint". The *People's Daily* of 13 July 1979 also commented on the "red terror" of the Cultural Revolution: "What was the result? Facts prove that many of those who were attacked or killed were innocent Party members, cadres or people".

#### *Djibouti (the Republic of)*

Djibouti, which gained independence from France in 1977, is a retentionist jurisdiction, though Amnesty International knows of no instance of executions since independence.

On 29 March 1979, Amnesty International called on President Hassan Gouled Aptidon to conduct an inquiry into the death under torture of Omar Mohammed, a soldier who died earlier that month while in pre-trial detention.

#### *Ethiopia*

There has been no new legislation since 1977 affecting the use of the death penalty. However, the practice appears to have changed. From about June 1978 or earlier the powers given to tribunals of urban dwellers associations (*kebelles*) and peasant associations to impose the death penalty for counter-revolutionary offences were administratively withdrawn. The state thus restored to itself the exclusive judicial power to impose and carry out the death penalty through civilian and military courts. The number of executions by these processes is not known. Nevertheless there were continuing reports during 1978 and 1979 of killings outside the framework of law carried out by the security forces against political opponents of the government, though at a reduced rate relative to late 1977 and early 1978.

#### *Indonesia (the Republic of)*

On 14 September 1978, the first execution of a common murderer in Indonesia was carried out by firing squad. The executed man, Husin bin Umar, had been convicted and sentenced to death in 1967. There are 41 persons at present known to be under sentence of death in Indonesia. Of these, nine are under sentence of death on criminal charges, 31 because of their alleged involvement in the 1965 *coup* and one for alleged activities on behalf of the Moslem *Kommando Jihad* (Holy War Command).

The maximum penalty for murder in Indonesia is death. This corrects the statement on page 82 of the report that "The maximum penalty for murder remains life imprisonment".

#### *Iran (the Islamic Republic of)*

After the revolution of February 1979 special courts known as "Islamic Revolutionary Tribunals" were established in Iranian cities to try persons who had held positions of authority under the Shah. Charges related not only to the torture and killing of dissenters and demonstrators, but also to being actively involved in the running of the country under the Imperial government. By 1 May 1979 approximately 160 people had been reported executed by firing squad.

The indictments made reference not only to secular offences, but also included religious concepts of Islamic law, such as "corruption on earth" *Mofsed-e-Fel'Arz*. *Sura* 5 verse 36 of the *Qu'ran* (translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali) reveals that "the punishment of those who wage war against God and His Apostle and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is execution . . . or exile from the land. . . ."

In some cases however defendants were only charged with "corruption on earth" as "their crimes [were] well enough known". (*Ettela'at* newspaper, Teheran, 13 March 1979). Examples included the cases of 12 people among whom were an army and police officer, a "theoretician of the previous regime" and a torturer. They were executed on 13 March.

The tribunals, which were created by the Islamic Revolutionary Council, initially operated without specific procedural rules. On 5 April 1979 a set of regulations was promulgated under which they were given jurisdiction to try "civil and political offences such as murder, torture, imprisonment of innocent Iranians, [acts undertaken to strengthen] the influence of foreigners [in Iran] or the disgraceful Pahlavi regime . . . ruining the economy . . . taking part in armed attacks . . . implementing programs against the national and public interest . . . or any [similar] abuse against the people". The tribunals also exercise jurisdiction over sexual offences such as homosexual rape.

The three-member tribunals are chaired by a religious judge whose word on all questions is apparently final. Many trials have been summary in nature and no adequate opportunity is afforded to prepare a defence. The sentences, none of which are stated in the regulations to be mandatory, include the death penalty. Acquittals have occurred.

Although the trials are normally carried out in secret, some foreign journalists have very occasionally gained access to trials in Teheran and the provinces. Local correspondents reported on 13 March that the chief government spokesman, Vice Premier Abbas Amir-Entezam had said that the trials were held *in camera* "for security reasons", and to preclude the "secrets revealed doing any damage". However, some trials are extensively covered by the local media.

No appeal is allowed from the sentences of the revolutionary court though one case is of particular note: on 22 April 1979 local correspondents reported the case of a condemned conscript in Kermanshah which, according to *Kayhan*, was sent to Qom for review by Ayatollah Khomeini after fellow conscripts physically prevented the prisoner from being transferred to the place of execution and threatened to take hostages in an attempt to publicize what in their view was an erroneous verdict. Amnesty International knows of no similar cases but the concern that the procedures being applied could result in the execution of

persons guilty of no crime even under present standards is not infrequently voiced.

Regulation 33 provides that sentences pronounced by the revolutionary tribunals prior to the coming into force of the regulations themselves remain valid. Illustrative of this are the cases of two persons convicted of murder by the Isfahan Revolutionary Tribunal. The three men, identified as an internal security chief, a SAVAK interrogator and a constable, were sentenced to death on 17, 18 and 22 March respectively. The regulations were promulgated on 5 April, the sentences were then confirmed by the Chief Revolutionary Protector in Teheran and the men taken to the firing squad on 6 April (*Kayhan* 7 April).

#### *Iraq (the Republic of)*

Two new capital offences were introduced in mid-1978. It became a capital offence for any serviceman who retired from, or left, the armed forces for any reason after 17 July 1968 to join or work for any party or political grouping other than the Ba'ath Party.

It also became a capital offence for anyone to enlist to another party or political grouping anyone with an organizational relation with the Ba'ath Party while knowing of his previous relation with that party. This is an amendment to article 200 of the penal code. There have been two previous amendments to this article, one in 1974 (see Report) and one in 1976 which makes it a capital offence for anyone who leaves the Ba'ath Party to join or work for another party or political grouping.

There is no information available as to whether anyone has been sentenced to death or executed under this new legislation.

#### *Israel (the State of)*

On 29 April 1979, in the aftermath of several violent incidents which followed the signing of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty, the Israeli cabinet sanctioned the use of the death penalty for "acts of inhuman cruelty". This overturned a 1967 Labour government decision that the death penalty would no longer be carried out, despite remaining in force under several provisions of the Defence Emergency Regulations, the Nazi and Nazi Collaboration Law (1950), the Crime of Genocide Law (1950) and for the crime of treason under the Penal Law (1957).

#### *Luxembourg (the Grand Duchy of)*

In the spring of 1979 the death penalty was abolished in law for all crimes in time of peace and war. The death penalty is still retained under the constitution, which will be amended to bring it in line with the law.

#### *Madagascar (the Democratic Republic of)*

Amnesty International knows of no executions in Madagascar during the period under review but in November 1977 special tribunals were created to deal with bandits, and were empowered to impose the death penalty. Defendants' legal rights are restricted and they have no right of judicial appeal.

#### *Malawi (the Republic of)*

According to information received by Amnesty International at least 35 people were hanged in Malawi during the first four months of 1979.

#### *Malaysia (the Federation of)*

In December 1978 the Privy Council in London granted an appeal against the validity of the Essential (Security Cases) Regulations based on the contention that they were subsidiary to the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance of 1969 which should have lapsed once Parliament reconvened in 1971. In January 1979, Parliament passed the Emergency (Essential Powers) Act enacting the 1969 Ordinance and all subsidiary legislation including the 1975 Regulations. The President of the Malayan Bar Council, which had advised its members to refuse to handle cases tried under the 1975 Regulations, called the retrospective legislation "ill-advised". In December 1978, 44 persons were reportedly in prison sentenced to death under the 1975 Regulations.

#### *Mozambique (the People's Republic of)*

The Mozambique government introduced the death penalty in February 1979 following sporadic acts of sabotage in Maputo and other towns. Under the new criminal code issued on 28 February, crimes such as treason and acts of terrorism or sabotage involving loss of life were made capital offences. The first executions under the new law were carried out in Maputo on 1 April 1979 when 10 people convicted of espionage and treason before a Revolutionary Military Tribunal were shot by firing squad. Another 13 executions had been carried out by the end of May 1979.

#### *Nigeria (the Federal Republic of)*

The death penalty is retained in the new constitution due to come into force on 1 October 1979, the date of the planned return to civilian rule.

Public executions of those convicted under the Armed Robbery Decree were suspended in October 1978, but resumed in March 1979, after a public outcry against a new wave of violent crime in the capital Lagos.

#### *Norway (the Kingdom of)*

In May 1979 Norway abolished the death penalty for all crimes in time of peace and war.

#### *Pakistan (the Islamic Republic of)*

On 4 April 1979 former Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto was hanged in Rawalpindi Jail despite the findings of three of the seven judges of Pakistan's Supreme Court that the prosecution had "failed to prove guilt beyond reasonable doubt" in his case. Execution of the death sentence under such circumstances is, as far as Amnesty International is aware, unprecedented in Pakistan.

An Amnesty International delegation, which had attended Mr Bhutto's review petition before the Supreme Court found there were legal grounds for

commutation of the death sentence that were particularly strong in Mr Bhutto's case, as he had been convicted on the basis of unconvincing evidence. (He had been convicted solely on evidence supplied by accomplices, which is normally not sufficient for conviction without substantial corroboration.)

Mr Bhutto was executed soon after all legal remedies had been exhausted, whereas the clemency petitions of his four co-accused, who had been sentenced to death with him, were "still being reviewed" by the government as of the time of writing (May 1979).<sup>\*</sup> Considering the unsatisfactory nature of Mr Bhutto's trial, and the evidence produced against him, there will always remain a strong suspicion that political factors only were responsible for the decision by President Zia-ul-Haq to execute Mr Bhutto, and that a miscarriage of justice occurred.

Mr Bhutto's execution was one of around 800 which, according to the then Law Minister A.K. Brohi, occur in Pakistan every year (*Dawn* 8 February 1979). This figure puts Pakistan among the countries with the highest number of yearly executions in Asia, and reports in the international press of February 1979 stated that President Zia-ul-Haq had dismissed all clemency petitions in death penalty cases since assuming office. Of particular concern to Amnesty International is the fact that among the hundreds of executions being carried out in Pakistan every year, many are those of civilians who are tried and convicted by military courts. These courts apply summary rules of evidence and many of the civilians accused cannot appeal to ordinary courts of law against a death sentence.

On 22 March 1978 three civilians were hanged outside Camp Jail Lahore, after having been found guilty by a military court of charges of kidnapping and murder. The executions were carried out publicly and were the first public hangings to occur for many years in Pakistan. They were also the first to occur under the present government.

#### *Peru (the Republic of)*

In a 307-article constitution drafted and approved by Peru's Constituent Assembly during its final session in the second week of July 1979, the death penalty was abolished for all offences in peace time. The penalty has been retained solely for cases of people convicted of treason in time of war. The new constitution will come into force in July 1980 when a civilian government takes over from the current military administration.

#### *Rhodesia [Zimbabwe]*

In September 1978 the Transitional Government introduced martial law throughout much of Rhodesia. The regulations which were introduced made provision for the establishment of special courts martial with jurisdiction to try any person charged with offences relating to the guerrilla war. These courts martial were empowered to impose any sentence—including the death penalty—so long as it did not exceed the maximum sentence which could have been imposed by the high court. A Review Authority was also set up to review all death sentences

<sup>\*</sup> On 24 July 1979 the four men convicted with Mr Bhutto were hanged—two in Rawalpindi District Jail and the others in prisons in Lahore and Faisalabad.

imposed by special courts martial. However, the composition and membership of the Review Authority is not known and its meetings are held *in camera*. Martial Law Regulations have subsequently prohibited judicial review of death sentences imposed by special courts martial.

No official figures are available to indicate how many people have been sentenced to death and executed since the introduction of martial law. In practice it is known that most defendants appearing before special courts martial are not legally represented, and it is widely suspected that the courts martial tend to impose more severe sentences than the high court would have done. It is known also that gross irregularities have occurred during the trials of a number of people sentenced to death by special courts martial, and such irregularities are thought to have been caused largely by a lack of legal training on the part of those military and other officials who preside at the courts martial.

Following the conclusion of the internal settlement agreement on 3 March 1978, it was widely reported that Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole had intervened effectively to end political executions in Rhodesia. However, further executions are known to have taken place within a short time of the 3 March 1978 agreement. Executions have also been carried out since Bishop Muzorewa became Prime Minister in June 1979.

#### *Rwanda (the Rwandese Republic)*

President Juvenal Habyalimana commuted all death sentences on 8 January 1979 to mark the formation of a new government and his re-election as president after a national referendum.

#### *Singapore (the Republic of)*

In 1978 death sentences against persons convicted under the amended Misuse of Drugs Act were carried out for the first time. Teh Sin Tong and Teo Hock Seng were hanged in April and August 1978 respectively. Both had been convicted on drug trafficking charges. At least 20 persons had been sentenced to death under the Drugs Act as of May 1979. Among them was Siti Aminah Binto Jaffar, a 19-year-old Malay girl, who was found guilty in August 1978 of abetting her boyfriend in the trafficking of heroin.

On 11 May 1979 three men convicted of armed robbery were hanged. The three were sentenced to death for illegal use of firearms—a capital offence in Singapore—although no injuries were sustained during the robbery.

#### *Somalia (the Somali Democratic Republic)*

Seventeen people were executed on 26 October 1978 after being convicted by the National Security Court of "endangering the unity, freedom and security of the nation". They were originally charged with attempting to overthrow the government during the abortive *coup* attempt of 9 April 1978, in which 28 people were killed. All except one of those condemned were military officers. They were permitted legal representation, and had access to their relatives. They were executed in public in Mogadishu, the capital, six weeks after the verdicts were given, following confirmation of verdict by the Head of State.

*Spain (the Spanish State)*

In December 1978 the death penalty was abolished in Spain for all crimes committed in time of peace. It was retained under military justice for specific offences committed in time of war. The death penalty had previously been abolished only under civilian law in the new constitution introduced in July 1978.

*South Africa (the Republic of)*

On 16 January 1979 the Minister of Justice reported in parliament that a total of 132 executions had been carried out in South Africa during 1978. One of those executed was white. All those executed were people who had been convicted of criminal offences.

On 6 April 1979 the execution of Solomon Mahlangu took place at Pretoria Central Prison. Mahlangu, 22, was convicted and sentenced to death in March 1978 on charges of murder and on charges under the Terrorism Act. These charges arose out of his participation in an incident in Johannesburg in June 1977 which resulted in the death of two white civilians. The execution of Mahlangu was the first execution for a politically-related offence since the mid-1960s.

*Taiwan (the Republic of China)*

At the end of May 1979 Wu Chun-fa (alias Wu Tai-an), an alleged "communist spy", was executed in Taipei by firing squad. He was sentenced to death in April on conviction of "plotting to overthrow the government by violent means". This was the first political execution known to have been carried out in Taiwan in the past five years.

*Tanzania (the Union Republic of)*

On 30 March 1978 Vice President Jumbe commuted three death sentences imposed in the 1973-74 Zanzibar treason trial. All remaining prisoners convicted at that time were freed in December 1978 after serving sentence, with full remission for good conduct. Death penalties imposed *in absentia* on four other Zanzibaris who were held under administrative detention on mainland Tanzania since 1972 were not formally commuted, although these four and other detainees were freed in April 1978 by President Nyerere. It is believed however that the ruling Zanzibar Revolutionary Council does not intend to proceed with these sentences if the persons concerned were to return to Zanzibar.

*Uganda (the Republic of)*

On 12 April 1979 the new government of President Yusuf Lule was sworn into office by the new Chief Justice, after the capture of the capital Kampala by the Tanzanian army and Ugandan exile force. The new government repealed decrees of President Amin creating special military tribunals empowered to impose the death penalty for a wide range of security and economic offences. Many people are believed to have been executed after summary trial by these tribunals during 1978 and 1979, including civilians refusing to be conscripted to fight the

liberation forces. In April 1979 all surviving prisoners, political and non-political, were freed by the liberation forces, including a number of convicted murderers.

The new government has stated its desire to retain the death penalty for the same offences as under previous civilian rule. It has also announced its intention to prosecute through the civil courts those members of the security forces and other officials of the previous administration against whom it has sufficient evidence to charge them with specific offences under the Uganda penal code. The government has sought the extradition of several former officials who had fled the country to face charges of murder.

*United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the)*

On 19 July 1979 the House of Commons, in a free vote, defeated a motion introduced by Conservative member of parliament Eldon Griffiths that "the sentence of capital punishment should again be available to the courts". The motion was defeated by 362 votes to 243 votes.

*United States of America*

On 1 May 1979 the laws of the following states provided for the death penalty for aggravated murder: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wyoming.

The following states were without death penalty statutes: Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minneapolis, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, West Virginia, Wisconsin. In some of these states the legislature is considering re-introducing the death penalty.

On 20 April 1979, 494 persons, nearly half of whom are members of racial minorities, were under sentence of death in 23 states. This figure included five women. Over 80 per cent of these prisoners had been sentenced in the courts of the 11 southern states of the old Confederacy: the largest death row populations being in Florida (125), Texas (108), Georgia (76) and Alabama (41).

Two further states have now provided that the death penalty be carried out by lethal injection: Idaho and New Mexico; bills to this effect have also been introduced elsewhere.

The execution of Mr John Evans in Alabama scheduled for 6 April 1979 was stayed at the last moment by US Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist and legal proceedings in the case are continuing. In Florida Mr John Spenklink, after having exhausted all avenues of appeal against the death sentence imposed on him in 1973, was executed in the electric chair on 25 May 1979. Immediately after the execution an Amnesty International mission to the United States pleaded with Florida state officials for the commutation of death sentences facing more than 130 prisoners on death row.

The US Congress continues to consider proposed federal legislation re-introducing the death penalty for a larger range of offences of homicide.

To Amnesty International's knowledge, as of 30 May 1979, the following countries had abolished the death penalty for all offences:

Austria	Ecuador	Luxembourg
Brazil	Fiji	Norway
Colombia	Finland	Portugal
Costa Rica	Federal Republic of Germany	Sweden
Denmark	Honduras	Uruguay
Dominican Republic	Iceland	Venezuela

*Note:* Legislation on the death penalty in both Australia and the United States of America is under the jurisdiction of individual states. In both countries, some states are abolitionist, others retentionist.

To Amnesty International's knowledge, as of 30 May 1979, the following countries had abolished the death penalty in time of peace, but retained it for specific offences committed in time of war.

Canada	Netherlands	Spain
Italy	Panama	Switzerland
Malta	Peru	

To Amnesty International's knowledge, as of 30 May 1979, the following states retained the death penalty but were believed not to have conducted executions in the period under review because of government policy:

Algeria	Guyana	Upper Volta
Belgium	Ivory Coast	
Greece	Seychelles	