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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

@Amnesty International welcomes death sentence commutations in Grenada

Amnesty International today sent a letter to Grenada's Prime Minister Nicholas Brathwaite to welcome yesterday's commutation of 14 death sentences. The letter was written by Ian Martin, Secretary General of Amnesty International, and the following quotations can be used for immediate release:

"Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to express Amnesty International's deep appreciation of the decision by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy to recommend that the Governor General commute the death sentences of the 14 prisoners convicted of the murder of former Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and others. We also welcome your announcement that a similar recommendation will soon be made with respect to other prisoners sentenced to death.

Amnesty International believes that this is an outstanding measure in promoting respect for human rights in Grenada and in the region. Commutation of death sentences is an affirmation of the value of life and is in keeping with international human rights standards and world progress toward elimination of the death penalty. We hope that such a humanitarian measure will provide an important example to other governments who may be encouraged to take similar steps."

Most of the countries in the English-speaking Caribbean retain the death penalty for murder. Although several hundred prisoners are on death row throughout the region, very few executions have been carried out. The last execution took place in Antigua in February 1991.