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NEWS FLASH

**USA -- VIOLATING INTERNATIONAL LAW:
CHILD OFFENDER EXECUTED, TWO MORE SCHEDULED TO DIE**

Last night the USA once again showed its contempt for international human rights law when it executed Douglas Christopher Thomas for a crime committed when he was 17 years old.

This was the fifth known execution of a child offender since October 1997. All five killings have been carried out in the USA. Since 1990 the USA has executed more child offenders (11) than the rest of the world combined (nine).

Thomas was put to death by lethal injection in Virginia at 9pm local time on 10 January. The US Supreme Court had earlier refused to consider an appeal based on international law banning the use of the death penalty against child offenders -- those who commit crimes when under aged 18.

Governor Gilmore denied clemency and allowed the execution to go ahead. This is the second time he has allowed a child offender to be executed (Dwayne Allen Wright was executed in Virginia on 14 October 1998). The Governor now has to decide whether he will allow a third such violation of international law to mark his governorship: Steve Edward Roach is scheduled for execution on Thursday night in Virginia for a crime committed at 17.

"Governor Gilmore should show leadership towards putting an end to the death penalty by granting clemency to Steve Roach," Amnesty International said.

A third such prisoner, Glen McGinnis is set to be put to death in Texas on 25 January for a crime committed at 17.

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For further information on these three cases, see *Shame in the 21st Century: Three child offenders scheduled for execution in January 2000* (AMR 51/189/99, December 1999).

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