

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 51/79/95

Distr: UA/SC

EXTRA 69/95

Death Penalty

9 June 1995

USA (Virginia)

Michael GEORGE

Michael George, white, is scheduled to be executed in Virginia on 27 June 1995.

He was sentenced to death for the June 1990 murder of a white man during a robbery. He has chosen to abandon his right to appeal against the sentence.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally as a violation to 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. The execution of prisoners who have chosen to abandon their appeals, and allow the state to execute them, is no less a gross human rights violation than any other execution. The fact that an individual makes such a choice does not relieve the state of its responsibility in taking the life of one of its citizens.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As of October 1994, there were 55 prisoners under sentence of death in Virginia. Since executions resumed in 1982, 26 prisoners have been put to death in the state under its present death penalty laws. The last prisoner to be executed was Willie Lloyd Turner, black, on 25 May 1995.

On 1 July 1994, the law was changed in Virginia to allow prisoners sentenced to death the choice of execution by electrocution or lethal injection. Previously executions had been by electrocution only. In Virginia, the authority to grant executive clemency lies with the state governor.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters in English:

- expressing concern that Michael George is scheduled to be executed in Virginia on 27 June 1995, while acknowledging the seriousness of the crime for which he was convicted;
- urging Governor Allen to commute Michael George's death sentence.

APPEALS TO:

State Governor
The Honourable George Allen
Governor of Virginia
State Capitol
Richmond, VA 23219
USA
Tel: +1 804 786 2211
Faxes: +1 804 786 3985

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

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and to diplomatic representatives of USA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 July 1995.