

PUBLIC

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Further information on EXTRA 35/01 (AMR 51/079/2001, 6 June 2001) - Death penalty / Legal concern

USA (Alabama)Geramie Hart, aged 17

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On 13 June, a jury in Jefferson County, Alabama, convicted 17-year-old Geramie Hart of capital murder and recommended a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. The prosecution had sought a death sentence.

Geramie Hart will be formally sentenced by the trial judge on 17 August. In Alabama, trial judges have the power to override the jury's sentencing recommendation. More than 30 individuals currently on death row in Alabama, around a sixth of the state's condemned prisoners, were sentenced by judges who overruled the jury's recommendation for a life sentence. Trial judges in Alabama are elected.

Sentencing defendants who were under 18 at the time of the crime to death or life without parole violates Article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognizes the immaturity of children and their capacity for rehabilitation.

Geramie Hart was charged with two counts of capital murder in the deaths of Deroy Nalls (78) and Millie Nalls (30), and two counts of attempted murder in the case of Mary Elizabeth Jones (10) and Elizabeth Nalls (73). He had just turned 16 at the time of the crime. A 14-year-old member of the attacked family was also charged, as an adult, with capital murder for her alleged role in the crime. Too young to face the death penalty under US law, she was reportedly convicted in March and sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

**No further action by the UA Network is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.**