

PUBLIC

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Further information on EXTRA 41/02 (AMR 51/081/2002, 29 May 2002) - Death penalty / Legal concern

USA (Virginia)Walter Mickens (m), black, aged 47

Walter Mickens was executed in Virginia on 12 June 2002. He was sentenced to death in 1993 for the murder of 17-year-old Timothy Hall.

Governor Mark Warner denied clemency about three hours before the execution.

In his statement he reportedly said: "Mickens was sentenced to death. The trial, verdict and sentence have been reviewed in detail by numerous state and federal courts, including the Supreme Court of Virginia and the Supreme Court of the United States. After a thorough review of the Petition for Clemency and the judicial opinions regarding this case, I decline to intervene". Walter Mickens's clemency petition was the first for Governor Warner since he took office.

In his final statement before being killed, Walter Mickens said that he forgave Governor Warner, and "whoever I may have hurt or caused harm to, I pray that you can forgive me".

Among those who called for clemency was the former head of the American Bar Association's ethics committee -- Mickens's trial lawyer had failed to reveal that he had also represented Timothy Hall just before his murder (see original action). The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights called for a stay of execution to allow it to consider the case.

Timothy Hall's sister and the prosecutor from the original trial were among those who urged Governor Warner to allow the execution to go ahead.

Amnesty International considers that Walter Mickens was sentenced to death after proceedings which failed to scrupulously protect his rights under international fair trial standards. As such, his execution amounted to an arbitrary deprivation of life in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Walter Mickens becomes the 32nd prisoner be put to death this year in the USA and the 781st since the USA resumed executions in 1977. Eighty-six of these executions have taken place in Virginia.

No further action is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.