

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 231/99 (AMR 51/145/99, 3 September 1999) - Death penalty / Legal concern

USA (South Carolina) Brett Blair Hollis, aged 19

The trial of Brett Blair Hollis, which was due to begin in Lexington, South Carolina, on 25 October 1999, has been postponed until February 2000.

The postponement came after the prosecution turned over evidence relevant to the defence. The defence needed more time to investigate and evaluate this evidence.

Brett Hollis was 17 at the time of the crime of which he is accused. Citing the international ban on the use of the death penalty against those under 18 at the time of the crime, the defence filed a motion to bar the prosecution from seeking the death penalty, at a pre-trial hearing on 8 October. The judge rejected the motion. In his opinion he wrote: "The Court is not convinced that any of the treaties and authorities cited or international law prohibit the State from seeking the death penalty in this case." However, because the defence has raised the issue, it is preserved for appeal to higher courts should Brett Hollis be convicted and sentenced to death.

No further action by the UA Network is requested at present, although further appeals may be requested in early 2000. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.