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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 180/94

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: INTERNAL - RWANDA  
EXTERNAL - USA

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

India - 16 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 175/94

Kosovo - 19 September - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

Algeria - first week of October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

France - 12 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

## TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Thailand - 18 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 176/94

Bhutan/Nepal - 25 August - See news service 168/94

Brazil - 14 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

Togo - 15 September - See news service 168/94

Indonesia - 28 September - LAUNCH OF CAMPAIGN

\*\* Turkey - 14 October \*\* - Targeted news service item on Turkey death penalty action. Will be sent to Turkish media only from IS.

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**MSF CALLS ON AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TO SEND MONITORS TO RWANDA**  
**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

The following questions and answers sheet is designed to help press officers and others to respond to questions on this recent event. Please note that the guidelines themselves are internal and the text should not be released publicly. This is an internal document, and should not be given to journalists or other members of the public.

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**Q: What does Amnesty International think about human rights monitors being sent into Rwanda as suggested by Belgium section of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)?**

**A:** Amnesty International supports the call by the Belgium section of MSF for a massive presence of human rights monitors in Rwanda. AI has been consistently calling for the presence of human rights monitors in Rwanda, including the speedy return of a greatly enlarged contingent of United Nations civilian police monitors and an expansion of their mandate so they can help prevent possible violations by their presence.

**Q: Why is the issue being raised now?**

**A:** The head of the Belgium section of MSF made a public appeal on Thursday (10 August) to Amnesty International and other non-governmental human rights organizations to send such monitors to safeguard the return of Rwandese refugees to their country.

**Q: Will Amnesty International send human rights monitors at this time?**

**A:** No. Amnesty International does not have the human or financial resources to send human rights monitors into the field at this time. Discussions between AI and MSF are continuing on areas where the two organizations can cooperate together on strategies for dealing with the human rights crisis in Rwanda.

**Q: What is Amnesty International doing to protect human rights in Rwanda?**

**A:** A team of three AI delegates are currently in Rwanda holding talks with officials of the new government to explore responses to the human rights crisis in that country. Detailed recommendations are being formulated, including calling for assistance from the international community to provide human rights observers and judicial experts to help set up independent and fair courts to bring those accused of genocide and other human rights violations to justice.

ENDS\

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**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: ANOTHER STATE SET TO RESUME EXECUTIONS**

**Amnesty International is calling on the Nebraska authorities not to follow in the footsteps of Idaho and Maryland and take the retrograde step of resuming executions after more than 30 years.**

**Nebraska will be the third US state to resume executions this year. Idaho and Maryland carried out their first executions in more than three decades earlier this year.**

**"We are extremely concerned at what appears to be a growing trend for resuming executions by states who have not carried out this form of punishment for many years," Amnesty International said.**

**The overwhelming conclusion from studies on the issue is that there is no reliable evidence that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other punishments, yet the USA continues to use it on an alarming scale.**

**Amnesty International is urging Nebraska to seek alternative methods of punishment, more in keeping with the standards and values of a civilized society.**

**Harold Lamont "Will" Otey, black, is scheduled to be executed on 2 September. He was sentenced to death in 1978 for raping and murdering Jane McManus, white, during a robbery at her home in 1977. He had no prior criminal record.**

**Otey was born into poverty in New Jersey, the third of 13 children. At the age of four he was sent to live with relatives who neglected, beat and abused him. Since his conviction for murder, Otey has taken steps to rehabilitate himself, studying literature, logic and philosophy and publishing three volumes of poetry.**

**Otey was denied clemency by the Nebraska Board of Pardons in June 1981 by two votes to one. A federal appeals court subsequently granted him a stay of execution, ruling that his clemency hearing had been unfair. This was on the grounds that the state Attorney General – who prosecuted the case on appeal both personally and through the Attorney General's office, and who has actively sought to expedite Otey's execution – also serves on the Nebraska Board of Pardons, along with the state Governor and the Secretary of State.**

**However, this ruling was overturned by a higher court and Otey's final appeal to the US Supreme Court was refused review in June, despite the Secretary of State's claim that "There are individuals in the institution convicted of multiple murders or even more heinous crimes than Otey who are serving life sentences".**

**There is now also ample evidence to show that in the USA, death sentences are imposed disproportionately on the poor, on minorities on the mentally ill or retarded, and on those without adequate legal counsel.**

**In 1990, 82 per cent of the research studies examined by the General Accounting Office (an independent agency of the federal government) into the effects of race on capital sentencing practices, suggested that people convicted of murdering white victims were likely to be sentenced to death more often than those who murdered black victims. These racial disparities remained after all other legally relevant factors had been taken into account.**

**"The USA stands alone among western industrialized nations in continuing to use the death penalty, a punishment which has no place in any society," Amnesty International said.**

**"It is a barbaric practice which serves no valid purpose, but instead brutalizes the society which uses it, particularly the individuals involved in its process."**

**Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**

**ENDS\**