

URGENT ACTION

JACK JONES EXECUTED IN ARKANSAS

Jack Jones, aged 52, was executed on 24 April for a murder committed in 1995. He was one of two men put to death in Arkansas on 24 April, the first time that a state in the USA has carried out two executions on the same day since 2000.

On 6 June 1995, 34-year-old Mary Phillips was robbed, raped and murdered at the accounting office where she worked as a bookkeeper. Her 11-year-old daughter who was with her was choked, beaten and left for dead, but survived. In April 1996, 31-year-old **Jack Jones** was convicted of capital murder, rape and attempted capital murder. The jury sentenced Jack Jones to death, without hearing that in the months before the crime, he had twice been diagnosed with bipolar disorder (formerly known as manic depressive illness), a serious mental disability.

After all final appeals had been rejected, and the US Supreme Court refused to intervene, Jack Jones was put to death on 24 April 2017. He was pronounced dead at 7.20 pm, 14 minutes after the lethal injection began. According to the state, "ADC [Arkansas Department of Correction] staff tried unsuccessfully to place a central line in Jones' neck", "at Jones' request, ADC placed two IV lines and the execution proceeded with two IV lines". The state said that "the claim that Jones was moving his lips and gulping for air is unsupported by press accounts or the accounts of other witnesses."

In a statement issued after execution, Governor Asa Hutchinson said: "“This evening the rule of law was upheld when the sentence of the jury for Jack Jones was carried out after 20 years of review. The victim's family has waited patiently for justice during that time. The jury sentenced Jack Jones to death, and his sentence was upheld by judges and reviewed thoroughly in courts of appeal at each level. A governor never asks for this responsibility, but I accept it as part of the solemn pledge I made to uphold the law. Jack Jones expressed his willingness to proceed today, and we hope this will help bring closure to the Phillips family.”"

This was one of two executions carried out in Arkansas on the evening of 24 April. This is the first time a state in the USA has carried out two executions on the same day since 9 August 2000 (Texas). There have now been nine executions in the USA this year, three of them in Arkansas. This brings the number of executions carried out in the USA to 1,451 since 1976, when the US Supreme Court upheld revised capital statutes. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally. Today, some 141 countries are abolitionist in law or practice.

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

This is the first update of UA 68/17. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr51/5976/2017/en/

Name: Jack Jones
Gender m/f: m

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