

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 51/32/97

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Further information on EXTRA 78/97 (AMR 51/26/97, 2 June 1997) - Possible death sentence for juvenile offender

USA (MISSISSIPPI)Azikiwe KAMBULE, aged 17, South African national

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Azikiwe Kambule, who was facing a possible death sentence in Mississippi, has had the threat removed. A judge ruled that prosecutors cannot seek a death sentence against Kambule when the trigger man, Santonia Berry, got life without parole after pleading guilty. The judge stated: "I think legally, morally and practically, Berry's plea removed the death penalty as an issue in this case."

Kambule has since agreed to plead guilty to aiding and abetting car-jacking and assisting in the attempt to sell the stolen car in return for the charge of capital murder being dropped. The District Attorney could have continued with the charge of capital murder in order to gain a sentence of life imprisonment without parole against Kambule.

A sentencing hearing will be held on 20 June 1997. The District Attorney is expected to request the court to sentence Kambule to the maximum term of 35 years' imprisonment allowed by the law for these charges.

Thank you to all those who sent appeals on Azikiwe Kambule's behalf. No further action is required by the Urgent Action Network.