

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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**Further information on EXTRA 32/94 (AMR 51/47/94, 27 June 1994) - and follow-ups:
AMR 51/50/94, 5 July - Death Penalty**

USA:Expansion of Federal Death Penalty

Legislation which authorizes the death penalty under federal law for around 60 new crimes was finally signed by President Clinton on 13 September 1994.

The crimes to which the federal death penalty will now be applied range from the murder of federal officials to non-homicidal offenses, including the attempted assassination of the President and major drug-related crimes. Previously the death penalty was authorized under federal law only for murder during aircraft hijacking and drug-related homicides.

There have been no executions under federal law since 1963. As of 20 July 1994 there were six prisoners under sentence of death under federal civilian law (sentenced under the Anti-Drugs Abuse Act, 1988). There are also 8 prisoners under sentence of death under Federal military law; these prisoners are not affected by the new law.

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

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing deep regret that President Clinton has authorized legislation which increases the number of crimes punishable by death under federal law;
- expressing concern that this move further adds to the concerns you already have about the use of the death penalty in the USA - that it is imposed disproportionately on the poor, on minorities, on the mentally ill or retarded and those without adequate legal counsel;
- reiterating some of the arguments against the use and expansion of the death penalty mentioned in the previous UA;
- urging that no executions are carried out under the new law.

APPEALS TO:

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Salutation: Dear Mr President

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Dear Attorney General

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PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY