

EXTERNAL

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Fear of Imminent Execution

9 September 1996

BARBADOSLeston Leroy HAREWOOD

Vincent MURRELL

Leston Leroy Harewood and Vincent Murrell have had death warrants read to them for their executions, which are to be carried out at 8am, local time, on Tuesday 10 September 1996.

Leston Harewood was first tried, for the murder of Arlene Watts, in 1988 and, following a re-trial, was sentenced to death in October 1991. His appeal to the Barbados Court of Appeal was dismissed in June 1994. He has spent more than six years in prison, and at least 4 years and 11 months on death row.

Vincent Murrell was sentenced to death in October 1991 for the murder of Lawson Belgrave. His appeal to the Barbados Court of Appeal was dismissed in April 1994. He has been on death row for 4 years and 11 months.

Both men had their appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) in London, the final court of appeal for Barbados, dismissed in May 1996.

In 1993, the JCPC issued a key ruling in a Jamaican case, that of Pratt and Morgan, that *"in any case in which execution is to take place more than five years after sentence there will be strong grounds for believing that the delay is such as to constitute "inhuman or degrading punishment or other treatment"*.

Lawyers in Barbados are believed to be lodging a constitutional appeal on behalf of both men and have already appealed to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which has requested that the executions be stayed pending their decision on the cases.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Barbados has not carried out any executions for nearly 12 years, since three men, Errol Farrell, Noel Jordan and Melville Inniss were executed in October 1984.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing deep concern that Leston Leroy Harewood and Vincent Murrell are scheduled to be executed and urging that their death sentences be commuted;
- expressing deep concern at the intention to resume the use of the death penalty in Barbados after nearly 12 years without executions;
- calling on the authorities not to take such a retrograde step, noting that detailed research in many countries has produced no evidence that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other punishment and pointing out the worldwide trend towards the abolition of the death penalty;
- expressing sympathy for the victims of violent crime and their relatives.

Other points which may be added:

- the death penalty is brutalizing to all who are involved in the process;
- it is arbitrary and often falls disproportionately on minority and underprivileged groups;
- it denies the widely accepted principle of rehabilitating the offender;
- it does not necessarily alleviate the suffering caused to the victims of crime.

APPEALS TO:

1) Governor-General

Sir Clifford Straughn Husbands
Governor General
Office of the Governor
General

Government House
Saint Michael
Barbados

Telegrams: Governor General, Saint Michael, Barbados

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Attorney General

The Hon David Simmons QC
Attorney General
Marine House
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Barbados

Fax: +1 809 435 9533

Telegrams: Attorney General, Christchurch, Barbados

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

3) Prime Minister

The Hon. Owen Arthur
Office of the Prime
Minister
Government Headquarters
Bay Street, St Michael
Barbados

Fax: +1 809 436 9250

Telegrams: Prime Minister, St Michael, Barbados

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

COPIES TO:

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Hon. Billie Miller
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Bay Street, St Michael
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and to diplomatic representatives of Barbados accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.