

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Penalty

1 December 1994

BELIZE

Alfred CODRINGTON, aged 33

Lindsberth LOGAN, aged 28

Nicolás Antonio GUEVARA, aged 34

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On 25 November, the Attorney General Dean Barrow announced to the House of Representatives that Alfred Codrington, Lindsberth Logan and Nicolás Antonio Guevara would be executed by hanging on 9 December 1994. If carried out these would be the first executions in Belize for more than nine years. On 24 November 1994 the Governor General Sir Colbille Young Sr. signed the death warrants for all three cases.

All three men had been sentenced to death for murder, a crime for which the death penalty is mandatory in Belize. Alfred Codrington was sentenced to death by the Supreme Court on 8 February 1993 for the murder in March 1992 of Winston Miguel. Lindsberth Logan was sentenced to death on 10 February 1993 for the murder of his girlfriend in Belize City, in July 1992; and Salvadorian Antonio Guevara was sentenced to death on 16 December 1993 for the murder of the manager of the Golden Button Ranch, in Northern Belize, in November 1992.

The Belize Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal of Alfred Codrington on 14 May 1993; of Lindsberth Logan in September 1993 and in the case of Antonio Guevara, his appeal was dismissed on 9 May 1994.

Appeals to the Belize Advisory Council, which grants the prerogative of mercy, were also dismissed in all three cases. The Advisory Council is composed of 12 members, all citizens of Belize, appointed by the Governor-General. One of its functions is to advise the Governor General on the royal prerogative of mercy.

Applications for leave to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) in London in the cases of Alfred Codrington and Lindsberth Logan are being pursued. The JCPC is the final court of appeal for Belize. Amnesty International requests that a stay of execution be granted in these two cases to allow the appeal to the JCPC to be considered. Amnesty International is also asking for a stay of execution in the case of Nicolás Antonio Guevara.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The last execution in Belize was that of Kent Bowers, carried out in June 1985, despite a petition for clemency reportedly signed by 2,500 people.

There are currently five people under sentence of death in Belize. Lorna James was sentenced to death in February for murder. Ellis Taibo, convicted and sentenced to death on 2 August 1992, is awaiting an appeal hearing before the JCPC. Dean Eduardo Vasquez and Catalino O'Neil, sentenced to death for murder in 1991, won their appeals to the JCPC and their cases were returned to the Court of Appeal in Belize for re-sentencing to a prison term. For more information on all these cases, see Amnesty International's Death by Hanging - The Death Penalty in Belize, AMR 16/02/93, February 1993.

Manuel Esquivel, of the United Democratic Party, took office after winning the June 1993 general elections.

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

- expressing concern that Alfred Codrington, Lindsberth Logan and Nicolás Antonio Guevara are scheduled to be executed on 9 December 1994;
- welcoming the fact that no executions have been carried out in the last nine years in Belize;
- pointing out that the resumption of executions would be a retrograde step in the protection of human rights for all citizens of Belize;
- highlighting some or all of the following:
  - \* execution is irrevocable and, despite the most stringent judicial safeguards, can be inflicted on the innocent;
  - \* it is brutalizing to all who are involved in the process;
  - \* it has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishment;
  - \* 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 alleviate the suffering caused to the victims of the crime;
- urging that the death penalty be abolished in Belize;

In appeals to the Governor General only:

- asking that he use his powers to commute the death sentences for all three men and that no further warrants of execution be issued;
- urging that, at the very least, stays be granted to allow time for applications for leave to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to be considered.

**APPEALS TO**

1) Governor General:

His Excellency  
 H.E. Dr. Colville Young  
 Governor General  
 Office of the Governor General  
 Belize House, Belmopan, BELIZE  
**Telegrams: Governor General, Belmopan, Belize**  
**Telexes: 211 BH**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

2) Prime Minister:

Mr. Rt. Hon. Manuel ESQUIVEL  
 Prime Minister  
 Office of the Prime Minister  
 East Block, Belmopan, BELIZE  
**Telegrams: Prime Minister Manuel Esquivel, Belmopan, Belize**  
**Faxes: + 501 8 22886**  
**Telexes: 138 B2**  
**Salutation: The Right Honorable**

3) Attorney General:

Hon. Dean BARROW  
 Attorney General The Honorable  
 Office of the Attorney General  
 Belmopan, BELIZE  
**Telegrams: Attorney General Dean Barrow, Belmopan, Belize**  
**Telexes: 211 B2**

**Salutation: Dear Sir**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1) Human Rights Commission of Belize:

Human Rights Commission of Belize

PO Box 533

Belize City, Belize

2) Lawyer:

Mr. B. Simeon Sampson

Attorney-At-Law

PO Box 773

Belize City, Belize

and to diplomatic representatives of Belize accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**