

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 17/02 (AMR 51/010/2002, 17 January 2002) - Death penalty / Legal concern

USA (Pennsylvania) Brandon Brown (m), white, aged 16

The District Attorney of Northumberland County in Pennsylvania has announced that he has changed his mind and will not now seek the death penalty against Brandon Brown for a murder committed when he was 15 years old.

International law bans the use of the death penalty against those who were under 18 at the time of the crime. District Attorney Anthony Rosini's move had also ignored a 1988 ruling by the US Supreme Court setting the minimum age at which defendants can be subject to the death penalty at 16 (at the time of the crime).

Brandon Brown is charged with the murder of his six-year-old neighbour, Jasmine Stoud, in August 2001 (date incorrectly given as August 2000 in the original UA). Brandon Brown turned 16 in October 2001.

On 16 January 2002, the District Attorney confirmed to Amnesty International that he was intending to seek the death penalty against Brandon Brown, that he was aware of the US Supreme Court precedent, and that he intended to "litigate the issue in the state and federal courts". Amnesty International issued its Urgent Action on 17 January.

On 21 January the local newspaper, *The Sunbury Item*, published an article noting that the case had "attracted international attention": "Letters condemning Rosini's decision have been sent from as far away as New Zealand, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom... All of them expressed sorrow about Jasmine's death. However, they also said they do not want to see the state take the life of a 16-year-old."

On 25 January, District Attorney Rosini issued a statement saying that his office would no longer be seeking the death penalty against Brandon Brown.

No further action is requested. Brandon Brown's lawyer has asked that his heartfelt thanks be sent to all who sent appeals.