

18 July 1997**EXTRA 104/97****Death Penalty**

**USA (TEXAS) William KITCHENS
James SESSIONS
Robert WEST
Daniel CORWIN
David HICKS**

The above five men are scheduled to be executed in Texas within the next few weeks.

William Kitchens, white, is scheduled to be executed on 24 July 1997.

James Sessions, black, is scheduled to be executed on 25 July 1997.

Robert West, Native American, is scheduled to be executed on 29 July 1997.

Daniel Corwin, white, is scheduled to be executed on 14 August 1997.

David Hicks, black, is scheduled to be executed on 28 August 1997.

Amnesty International has no further details on the above cases. Further executions are being scheduled in Texas on an ongoing basis.

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International remains deeply concerned at the number of executions being carried out in the USA in general, and the increasing use of the death penalty in Texas in particular. Of the 401 executions carried out in the USA since the death penalty was resumed in the mid 1970s, 130 have been carried out in Texas. Texas has carried out 24 of the 43 executions which have taken place in the US so far this year. The method of execution is lethal injection.

In Texas the governor may commute a sentence of death only if he receives a favourable recommendation from the Board of Pardons and Paroles. The Board consistently refuses to hold full clemency hearings in death penalty cases, and apart from a number of commutations granted in the 1980s as the result of two key court rulings, the Board has never recommended clemency in any death penalty case in recent years. Amnesty International has described Texas death penalty procedures as a "human rights scandal".

As of July 1996 there were 394 prisoners under sentence of death in Texas. The most recent person to be executed in Texas was Irineo T Montoya on 18 June 1997.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please telephone or send telegrams and/or faxes in English if possible:

- expressing deep concern that William Kitchens, James Sessions, Robert West, Daniel Corwin, and David Hicks are scheduled to be executed on 24 July, 25 July, 29 July, 14 August, and 28 August 1997 respectively, and at the high number of executions currently taking place in Texas;
- urging the Board to recommend that Governor Bush grant clemency to all five prisoners;
- expressing concern and sympathy for the families and friends of the victims of violent crime;
- expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases.

APPEALS TO:

Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles
Executive Clemency Unit
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Pardons and Paroles Division
PO Box 13401
Austin, TX 78711, USA

Faxes: + 1 512 467 0945

Telephone: +1 512 406 5852

Telegrams: Pardons and Paroles Board, Austin, Texas

Salutation: Dear Board Members

COPIES TO:

The Honourable George W. Bush
Governor of Texas
Office of the Governor
PO Box 12428, Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711, USA

Faxes: +1 512 463 1849

Salutation: Dear Governor

and to diplomatic representatives of the USA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY