

**ST. LUCIA Five prisoners on death row whose appeals may soon be denied**

According to information received by Amnesty International, five prisoners on death row in St Lucia may soon have their appeals for clemency denied. The organization fears that, should this happen, the prisoners will face imminent execution.

Amnesty International's fears have been heightened by the execution of Joseph Solomon on 17 October 1995, the first execution in St. Lucia for over nine years. Joseph Solomon was executed less than a month after his appeal was dismissed. Amnesty International was unaware that his execution had been scheduled and was unable to appeal on his case. It fears that the execution of other prisoners whose appeals are denied may also be speedily carried out.

The organization is further concerned by reports that a prisoner acted as the hangman in the execution of Joseph Solomon.

The day after the execution, the Minister of Legal Affairs and Attorney General, Lorraine Williams, told the Caribbean News Agency (CANA), that "the resumption of hanging in St. Lucia should send a strong signal to criminal elements that the senseless killing taking place in the country must stop". The minister referred to a rise in crime in St. Lucia, including a recent spate of murders, and expressed the view that hanging would have a deterrent effect.

In press reports following the execution, the Attorney General explained that there are now eight or nine prisoners on death row, most of whom still have appeals pending. She went on to say that the Mercy Committee, headed by Prime Minister John G. M. Compton, would consider whether the death penalty should be carried out as soon as these appeals had been dealt with.

She further stated that "most of them, death row inmates, currently have their appeals pending before the Privy Council, while others are before the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeal". She also said that the Mercy Committee had met several times during 1995 and had on a number of occasions advised the Governor General to extend clemency to those condemned.

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. Furthermore the death penalty has never been shown to have any special deterrent effect against violent crime as expressed by the Attorney General.

Amnesty International believes that the resumption of hangings in St. Lucia is a retrograde step which is contrary both to international standards and to the worldwide trend towards abolition of the death penalty.

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

- expressing deep regret that with the execution of Joseph Solomon, St. Lucia has resumed the use of the death penalty after a gap of nine years;
- urging the government of St. Lucia not to carry out any further executions, and urging that all death sentences be commuted;
- expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty which has never been shown to have any special deterrent effect against violent crime (If your country has abolished the death penalty, it is especially important to mention any national experience demonstrating this);

**Letters may also include some of the following:**

- Express sympathy for the victims of violent crime and their relatives;
- acknowledge the seriousness of the crime for which Solomon was sentenced to death;
- Express regret at the use of a prisoner as hangman;
- urging that all necessary steps be taken towards the abolition of the death penalty, explaining that international human rights standards and treaties encourage governments to restrict the use of the death penalty;
- state that executions are contrary to the world trend towards the abolition of the death penalty;
- express concern that according to research studies, including those of Amnesty International, the death penalty is imposed disproportionately on the poor, on minorities, on the mentally ill or retarded, on those without adequate legal counsel, and on people from deprived backgrounds;
- note that execution is irrevocable and, despite the most stringent safeguards, may be imposed on the innocent.

**APPEALS TO:**

The Right Honourable John G M Compton  
Prime Minister and Minister of Finance,  
Planning and Development  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Government Building  
Laborie Street  
Castries, St. Lucia  
**Faxes: +1 809 453 7352**  
**Telegrams: Prime Minister Compton, Castries, St Lucia**  
**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

The Honourable Lorraine Williams  
Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs  
Ministry of Legal Affairs and Office of the Attorney General  
Attorney General's Chambers  
Government Building  
Laborie Street  
Castries, St. Lucia  
**Faxes: +1 809 453 6315**  
**Telegrams: Attorney General Williams, Castries, St Lucia**  
**Salutation: Dear Attorney General**

**COPIES TO:**

*The Voice of St. Lucia*  
Odessa Bldg, Darling Rd,  
POB 104,  
Castries, St. Lucia  
**Faxes: +1 809 453 1453**

and to diplomatic representatives of St. Lucia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 December 1995.