
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 276/94

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **BELIZE**

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Afghanistan - 15 December - SEE NEWS SERVICES 275 AND 267

Bosnia - CANCELLED - SEE NEWS SERVICE 268

We are cancelling the news release to go with the SLA starting on 21 December. This is because the situation in Bosnia is so uncertain at the moment - whatever happens in the near future is unlikely to relate to the SLA report. We are watching the situation closely and will do a speedy reactive news item if AI concerns come up.

Sudan - 25 January - SEE NEWS SERVICES 275 AND 261

Turkey - 8 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 261

Northern Iraq - 28 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 266

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

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BELIZE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL APPEALS AGAINST IMMINENT EXECUTIONS

Amnesty International is urgently calling on Sir Colville Young Sr., Governor General of Belize, to stop the executions of three men in Belize this Friday -- the opening day of the Americas Summit in Miami, where heads of state from the Americas and the Caribbean are meeting for discussions which will include human rights.

If these executions take place, they would be the first to be carried out in Belize since the execution of Kent Bowers in 1985, which went ahead despite a petition for clemency reportedly signed by 2,500 people.

"To resume executions would be a retrograde step in the protection of human rights for all citizens of Belize," Amnesty International said. "This is a punishment which has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than any other but which brutalizes all those involved".

The three were all convicted of murder, which carries a mandatory death sentence in Belize. Their appeals to the Belize Court of Appeal and the Belize Advisory Council have been dismissed, after proceedings which left doubts as to whether the appeals had been adequately examined.

In the cases of Alfred Codrington and Lindsberth Logan, applications for leave to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, (JCPC) in London -- the final court of appeal for Belize -- are being pursued.

"We are urging the Governor General that, at the very least, stays of execution be granted to allow time for applications for leave to appeal to the JCPC be considered," Amnesty International said. Death warrants for all three men, setting the date of execution for 9 December, were only signed on 24 November.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases and without reservation; it is an arbitrary punishment which often falls disproportionately on minority and under-privileged groups and, despite the most stringent judicial safeguards, can be inflicted on the innocent.

There are currently two other people under sentence of death in Belize, the human rights organization is also calling for no further warrants of execution to be issued and for the abolition of the death penalty in Belize.

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