

URGENT ACTION

EXECUTION CARRIED OUT IN ALABAMA

Holly Wood, a 50-year-old African American man with significant mental impairments, was executed by lethal injection in Alabama on the evening 9 September. He had spent 16 years on death row.

Governor Bob Riley denied clemency for **Holly Wood** on 9 September and he was executed later the same day. In a statement, the Governor said, "Wood committed a premeditated act of murder that took the life of Ruby Gosha, the mother of his child. For his brutal crime, he was tried and convicted by a jury and the jury recommended he be sentenced to death. This conviction and death sentence have been upheld by higher courts, and I see no reason why this office should overturn the sentence that was imposed by a jury and upheld by the courts."

Holly Wood's former girlfriend, Ruby Lois Gosha, the mother of their son, was shot in her home on 1 September 1993. A jury convicted Holly Wood of her murder on 21 October 1994. At the sentencing hearing, Holly Wood was represented by a lawyer who had been admitted to the bar five months earlier, had no trial or criminal law experience, and had never worked on a capital case before. The presentation of mitigating evidence at the sentencing was minimal. In particular, there was no evidence at all presented about Holly Wood's mental ability despite the lawyers being in possession of an expert report indicating that Wood operated, "at most, in the borderline range of intellectual functioning". Four federal judges on three courts concluded that he was denied adequate legal representation at the sentencing stage of his 1994 trial.

Holly Wood made no final statement before being put to death.

There have been 38 executions in the USA this year, four of them in Alabama. Since the USA resumed judicial killing, there have been 1,226 executions nationwide, 48 of which have been carried out in Alabama.

No further action is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the 1st update of UA 180/10 (AMR 51/073/2010). Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR51/073/2010/en>

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