

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 334/91 (AMR 16/04/91, 10 October 1991) - Death Penalty

BELIZE: Dean Edwardo VASQUEZ

Dean Edwardo Vasquez, who was sentenced to death by hanging by the Supreme Court of Belize on 21 June 1991 for the murder of his common-law wife on 16 August 1990, has been given leave to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) in London, England. The JCPC is the final court of appeal for Belize.

Dean Vasquez had been scheduled to be executed on 30 October 1992 in Belize City, Belize, but the JCPC announced on 27 October that they would allow the case to be reviewed on constitutional grounds. Following the decision by the Privy Council, the Warrant of Execution issued by the Governor-General of Belize was rendered invalid and the execution was not carried out. The appeal against the conviction for murder will be heard by the JCPC in due course and should the appeal be dismissed a new warrant will need to be issued.

All the legal appeals made on behalf of Dean Vasquez in Belize had already been rejected. On 17 September 1991 an appeal to the Belize Court of Appeal was dismissed and his sentence affirmed. In October 1991, the Advisory Council again affirmed the sentence. The case then went to the JCPC who in July 1992 turned down the appeal.

Amnesty International only learned of the scheduled execution a couple of weeks before it was due to be carried out. In order to generate very fast appeals EXTRA 82/92, AMR 16/02/92, dated 14 October 1992, was issued to a limited part of the Urgent Action network. This action and its follow-up, AMR 16/02/92, dated 5 November 1992, may be referred to for further information.

No further action is required from the Urgent Action network at present. Thank you to all those who sent appeals on behalf of Dean Vasquez.