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Trinidad and Tobago - Three men hanged today

Amnesty International is dismayed that Dole Chadee, Joey Ramiah and Ramkalawan Singh were hanged today.

“We call on the President of Trinidad and Tobago to stop the executions of Russell Sankeralli, Clive Thomas and Robin Gopaul which are scheduled to take place tomorrow as well as the hangings of Joel Ramsingh, Bhagwandeem Singh and Stephen Eversley, which are scheduled to take place on Monday.”

The nine men were convicted in 1996 of the murder of Deo and Roomkin Baboolal and two of their children, Monica and Hamilton.

“The death penalty has not been shown to be an effective deterrent to the crime of murder,” Amnesty International said.

“We urge the government of Trinidad and Tobago to devote its resources to finding effective responses to the public outcry over the rise in violent crime.”

Often relatives of victims of murder feel that the death penalty, as a form of punishment, does little to alleviate their grief. Osmond Baboolal, the surviving son of the Baboolal family has stated that executing the men who have been convicted of murdering his family members will do nothing to ease the pain of his loss. Amnesty International wishes to express deep sympathy for the remaining relatives of the victims of this terrible crime.

These hangings take place just a week after Trinidad and Tobago became the first country ever to withdraw as a state party to the American Convention on Human Rights and within a year of its having taken other steps which undermine the Inter-American system for the protection of human rights. Amnesty International calls on the government of Trinidad and Tobago to join in the efforts to strengthen and enhance the international systems for the protection of human rights which have been created over the last 51 years.

The organization is calling on the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), which begins in Guatemala on Monday, to call on all member-states to impose a moratorium on the death penalty.

Next week, when the nine men are dead, the people of Trinidad and Tobago will have to ask themselves the following question: “Is there something wrong when a state sanctions killing as a punishment for murder?”

Background: In a petition transmitted to the authorities yesterday, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and other Nobel Prize winners José Ramos-Horta (East Timor), Professor Sir Joseph Rotblat KCMG FRS (UK), the Reverend Jesse Jackson and other political leaders from Trinidad and Tobago to South Africa joined with Amnesty International, other non-governmental organizations, lawyers,

scholars, and others in urging the government of Trinidad and Tobago to stop the hangings. The petition also calls on the government of Trinidad and Tobago to introduce and support legislation to create alternatives to capital punishment for the crime of murder as a first step in joining the majority of nations all over the world in abolishing the death penalty. At present the death penalty is the mandatory punishment for all forms of murder in Trinidad and Tobago. The American Convention on Human Rights, a fundamental human rights treaty, was adopted by the OAS thirty years ago.

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