

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 49/10/96

5 September 1996

Further information on EXTRA 37/96 (AMR 49/06/96, 11 March 1996) and follow-up (AMR 49/08/96, 14 March 1996) - Death Penalty

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Michael WANZAR
Kenneth TEESDALE
Raffick SAHADATH
Elvis PENNY
Franklyn GONZALES

Amnesty International has learned that the death sentences of the above prisoners have been commuted to 75 years imprisonment with hard labour. This is the first time that the President (acting on the advice of the Minister of National Security) has imposed a fixed period of incarceration. On previous occasions death row prisoners have had their sentences commuted to "life imprisonment".

The commutations are a result of the 1993 ruling of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in Pratt and Morgan v. The Attorney General of Jamaica (see original EXTRA for further details). However, the death warrants were issued even though the Pratt and Morgan ruling would apply and - given that Trinidad and Tobago executed Glen Ashby in 1994 while the appeal courts were hearing his case - there was an acute danger that these five prisoners could have been executed.

Thank you to all those who sent appeals on behalf of the five prisoners. No further appeals are required by the Urgent Action Network.