

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 294/05 (AMR 51/188/2005, 21 November 2005) - Death Penalty

USA (California)

Stanley Tookie Williams (m), black, aged 51

Stanley Tookie Williams was executed on 13 December. According to press reports, the execution team took about 12 minutes to find a vein in Williams's arm in which to insert the catheter for the lethal injection. At one point, Williams reportedly lifted his head and appeared to say: "Still can't find it?"

Williams's attorneys had submitted a petition asking for clemency to California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, saying that Williams deserved clemency because he had reformed himself while on death row. The clemency petition also referred to the fact that Williams had always maintained his innocence of the crimes which sent him to death row. Governor Schwarzenegger denied clemency in a five-page written statement, saying that the evidence of Williams's guilt was clear and that Williams was unworthy of clemency because he had neither admitted he committed the murders or shown remorse for the crimes.

Stanley Williams was one of the founders of the notorious "Crips" street gang in Los Angeles, California, in the early 1970s. He was sentenced to death for killing four people during two separate robberies in 1979. While on death row he completely transformed himself, repudiating his past acts and violent lifestyle and dedicating himself to educating young people about the dangers of gang life. He consistently maintained his innocence of the killings for which he was sentenced to death.

According to press reports, Williams spent his final hours meeting with friends, talking on the phone and reading from letters sent to him by well-wishers from around the world.

Protestors reportedly gathered outside the prison throughout the night, with estimates of as many as 1,000 people. There were also small, scattered protests around the state.

Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the Urgent Action network.