

The Honorable Asa Hutchinson  
Governor of the State of Arkansas  
State Capitol, Suite 250  
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AR 72201  
USA

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Dear Governor,

I am appealing to you to respectfully ask you to make immediate use of your power of clemency to halt the executions scheduled in your state this month.

After over a decade without any, I am deeply concerned that Arkansas is resuming executions instead of joining the majority of the world's countries and the 19 US states that have abolished this punishment once and for all. Only a handful of countries are responsible for the more than 90% of executions recorded globally each year; the executions and death sentences in the USA recorded annually have reached historical lows.

There is a growing awareness that the death penalty has failed in its supposed purpose of making us safer, while its negative impact on the human rights of individuals –exacerbated by arbitrariness, discrimination and error– has indelibly tainted criminal justice systems that use it.

The cases of the eight men scheduled to be executed in Arkansas imminently are representative of these concerns. Two men who have serious mental disabilities are facing execution, in violation of international law. In a number of the cases, critical mitigating evidence was not presented to the trial jury, which then voted for the death penalty instead of life imprisonment on the basis of the information they had been provided. After decades in the care of the state Department of Corrections, some of the men who are about to be executed have turned their lives around and have demonstrated they could safely serve an alternative sentence.

The closeness of the execution dates, which appears to be for no reason other than the availability of lethal injection chemicals, adds to the cruelty of the punishment that is about to be meted out and unduly burdens all parties involved, from attorneys representing multiple clients, unable to provide effective representation; to corrections department staff, tasked with performing multiple executions in a single day; to those involved in the consideration of clemency applications with yourself, lacking sufficient time to meaningfully evaluate the merits of each case.

By seeking your intervention, I am in no way trying to downplay the seriousness of the murders committed nor their impact on those close to the victims. I am rather asking you to be a champion of human rights and show to all that the taking of a life by the state in the name of an imperfect justice system has no place in society.

Sincerely yours,

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