



EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Deputy Head of Delegation

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The Honourable Bill Haslam
Governor of Tennessee
Tennessee State Capitol
Nashville, TN 37243

Subject: Planned execution of Mr Billy Ray Irick

Dear Governor Haslam,

The European Union regrets that the State of Tennessee plans to execute Mr. Billy Ray Irick on August 9th, 2018. The European Union wishes to make an urgent humanitarian appeal on his behalf.

The EU recognises the serious nature of the crimes involved and wishes to express its sincere sympathy to the family and friends of the victim. However, the EU does not believe that the use of the death penalty can ever be justified, or that it acts as a credible deterrent. It is our position that the elimination of the death penalty is fundamental to the protection of human dignity. The EU aims at the universal abolition of the death penalty, seeking a global moratorium as a first step.

We wish to note with concern that there is evidence to show that Mr Irick has a life-long, severe, and well-documented history of mental illness. The EU strongly believes that the execution of persons suffering from mental illness or mental disorder is contrary to widely accepted human rights norms and standards. In jurisdictions where it has not been abolished yet, the EU therefore holds that the death penalty should not be imposed on any individual suffering from mental illness.

The execution of Mr Irick would be the first in Tennessee since 2009. Ending this de facto moratorium goes against a nation- and worldwide trend, and is a political step which would set Tennessee back in the progressive development of human rights. We are also concerned with the problematic execution protocol to be used, which is still being challenged in US courts.

Therefore, Mr Governor, we respectfully urge you to exercise all powers vested in your office to commute Mr Irick's sentence and grant him relief from the death penalty.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Vicini

Deputy Head of Delegation