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Outcome UA: 52/24 Index: AMR 51/8218/2024 USA of June 27, 2024

USA CLEMENCY DENIED, TEXAS EXECUTES AGAIN

Ramiro Gonzales, 41, was executed in Texas on June 26, 2024. He was sentenced to death in 2006 for a murder he committed in 2001 at age 18. At that time, he was emerging from a childhood filled with abuse and neglect. The courts did not stop the execution, even though the state's expert witness had given inaccurate testimony, which was later recanted. This testimony had convinced the jury that Gonzales would commit more violent crimes if he lived, a requirement for the death penalty in Texas. However, Gonzales's prison record showed a history of non-violence and personal growth.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

On June 24, 2024, the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles unanimously voted against clemency for Ramiro Gonzales. In their final appeals, Gonzales's lawyers asked the US Supreme Court to reconsider the "future dangerousness" aspect of the Texas capital statute. They argued that Gonzales was sentenced to death in 2006 because a jury predicted he would commit violent crimes in prison. However, during his 18 years on death row, Gonzales did not commit any acts of violence or criminal acts. His lawyers contended that without any current risk of violence, Gonzales was ineligible for execution under Texas law. Despite this, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals stated that the future dangerousness assessment is only made at the time of trial and cannot be reevaluated. On June 26, 2024, the US Supreme Court declined to intervene.

In an interview a week before his execution, Ramiro Gonzales expressed his desire to change and help others, stating that being labeled a menace to society motivated him to rehabilitate himself. He believed the state was reluctant to acknowledge the potential for rehabilitation among prisoners. Gonzales was executed by lethal injection and pronounced dead at 6:50 PM. In his final statement, he apologized to the victim's family, expressing deep remorse for the pain and loss he caused.

Ramiro Gonzales's lawyer highlighted his difficult childhood marked by abuse and neglect, which led to poor choices and drug use. Despite his past, the lawyer described Gonzales as a deeply spiritual and remorseful person who aimed to spread love even while on death row. This year, Texas has carried out two executions out of eight nationwide. Since 1976, there have been 1,590 executions in the USA, with 588 in Texas alone. Texas has executed 10 people for crimes committed when they were 18 since 2014.

Article 10(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) emphasizes the goal of prisoner reformation and social rehabilitation. The UN Human Rights Committee, overseeing the ICCPR, advocates for the abolition of the death penalty. The USA ratified the ICCPR in 1992.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases, without exception.