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**OFFENER BRIEF AN DEN US-BOTSCHAFTER IN LUXEMBURG, J. RANDOLPH EVANS**

H.E. Ambassador J. Randolph Evans

United States Embassy

22 Boulevard Emmanuel Servais

L-2535 Luxembourg

14 December 2020

Dear Ambassador Evans,

ACAT-Luxembourg wishes to convey to you its alarm at the number of executions carried out under US federal law in recent months. Last week, in the space of two days, two federal death row inmates – Brandon Bernard and Alfred Bourgeois – were executed. Their deaths, on 10 December (International Human Rights Day) and 11 December, marked the ninth and tenth executions since Attorney General William Barr resumed the use of the federal death penalty in July of this year following a 17-year hiatus. A further three federal executions are scheduled to take place before the end of January.

This unprecedented rate of executions for any US administration is of grave concern. Not only do we firmly believe – as do all human rights organisations – that this practice constitutes a violation of the most fundamental of human rights, namely the right to life, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all the major international and regional human rights standards. We would also remind you, as has been repeatedly demonstrated, that capital punishment does not act as a deterrent against crime. Whatever the crime that may have been committed, nothing can justify the killing of such offenders. The US is a strong country, which has all the necessary mechanisms to hold dangerous offenders accountable and be safe from them without the need for executions. Furthermore, the high rate of federal executions goes against current trends as regards state executions in the US.

We therefore ask you to convey our concern to President Donald Trump and to President-elect Joe Biden, whom we urge to ensure:

* that an immediate halt is brought to federal executions, and that the death sentences of all remaining federal and military death row prisoners are commuted to life sentences;
* that steps are taken as a matter of urgency to abolish capital punishment at federal level.

Yours sincerely,

Christina Fabian

 Chair of ACAT-Luxembourg