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### **Press Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Georgia Death Row Inmate Files Final Appeal Today New Evidence Questions His Guilt!**

**Atlanta** – Georgia death row inmate Troy Anthony Davis is down to his last judicial chance for reprieve. Davis' lawyers will file his final appeal, or "certiorari" petition, with the US Supreme Court today.

Troy Davis was convicted 15 years ago for the murder of a police officer in Savannah, Georgia. However, since his initial trial, recanted and new witness testimony has created serious doubts that he committed the murder. The prosecution built its case solely on witness testimony – no physical evidence was used to gain the conviction. The murder weapon was never found.

Jurors at the time did not know that most of the witnesses had been pressured and coerced by police to sign affidavits implicating Davis. Six witnesses of nine have recanted their testimony. One witness who maintains his story is an actual suspect in the case. This suspect, Sylvester Coles, has been implicated by nine witnesses in signed affidavits as the murderer.

New laws have made it extremely difficult for Davis to receive meaningful review. In fact, the appeals courts have yet to provide a hearing of the new evidence.

Davis' case came before the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Federal Appeals Court in September, 2005. Afterwards, Judge Rosemary Barkett expressed concern about the new witness testimony and lack of adequate review, stating, "If these people say, 'I was coerced by the police,' how could he [Judge Nangle] reject that without a hearing?"

Amnesty International has initiated a global campaign appealing to the State Board of Pardons and Paroles to grant clemency should the US Supreme Court turn down Davis' appeal request.

"Wrongful convictions are an alarming reality – over 120 people have been exonerated from death row since 1973," said Jared Feuer, Director of Amnesty International USA's Southern Regional Office. "The evidence must be examined - Georgia must not make a tragic and irreparable mistake by wrongfully executing Troy Davis," he continued.

**AI's report on Davis:** <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR510232007>

#### **Available for interview:**

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# Georgia set to execute Troy Davis without a fair appeal!

Troy Davis has been on death row for 15 years for the murder of a police officer in Savannah, Georgia – yet compelling new evidence has not been heard in court!

## The trial evidence was weak

- Davis's conviction was based solely on inconsistent witness testimony.
- No physical evidence from the crime scene was used to convict Davis.
- The murder weapon was never found.

## All but three prosecution witnesses have recanted in signed affidavits

Six of the nine prosecution witnesses have since recanted.

The jury did not know that most of the witnesses were pressured or coerced by police.

**Darrell Collins:** *"[The police] were telling me that I was an accessory to murder and that I would ... go to jail for a long time and I would be lucky if I ever got out, especially because a police officer got killed...I was only sixteen and was so scared of going to jail."*

**Antoine Williams:** *"After the officers talked to me, they gave me a statement and told me to sign it. I signed it. I did not read it because I cannot read ... I was totally unsure whether he was the person who shot the officer. I felt pressured to point at him ... I have no idea what the person who shot the officer looks like."*

**Jeffrey Sapp:** *"The police came and talked to me and put a lot of pressure on me.... They wanted me to tell them that Troy confessed to me about killing that officer. The thing is, Troy never told me anything about it. I got tired of them harassing me .... I told them that Troy did it, but it wasn't true."*

**Daniel Kinsman:** *"[T]here was and is no doubt in my mind that the person who shot the officer had the gun in and was shooting with his left hand." Davis is right-handed.*

**Dorothy Ferrell:** *"I was scared that if I didn't do what the police wanted me to do, then they would try to lock me up again. I was on parole at the time and I had just gotten home from being locked up earlier that year.... I told the detective that Troy Davis was the shooter, even though the truth was that I didn't see who shot the officer ... I had four children at that time, and I was taking care of them myself."*

## One witness against Davis is a suspect in the case

Sylvester "Red" Coles, who was at the crime scene, testified that he carried a gun that night that he threw away. Nine individuals have signed affidavits implicating Coles in the murder.

**Shirley Riley:** *"People on the streets were talking about Sylvester Coles being involved with killing the police officer, so one day I asked him if he was involved .... Sylvester told me he did shoot the officer."*

## Changes in U.S. law make it difficult to appeal death penalty cases

Over 120 people have been exonerated from the nation's death rows in the past thirty years, including many with faulty witness testimony. The new evidence in Davis's case has not been heard because of legal obstacles put in place since the time of his conviction. For example, in 1995 Congress voted to eliminate federal funding for the post-conviction defender organizations which provide legal assistance to indigent death row prisoners.

## Ask the State Parole Board to stop the execution!

Davis's main hope now is the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, which has the power to grant clemency.

**Please assist Amnesty International in its letter writing campaign: [www.GFADP.org](http://www.GFADP.org)**

For further information about the case, and to read the other witness statements, please read the Amnesty International report "Where is the Justice for Me?" at [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)