

Virtual Human Rights Conference Focuses on Trump's Federal Execution Spree

The conference will feature international human rights icons like Sister Helen Prejean, Amanda Knox and others

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- In response to an unprecedented bacchanal of federal executions, human rights organizations have teamed up to present a virtual conference exploring the failure of the death penalty in the United States. The federal execution spree continues on International Human Rights Day (Dec. 10) and the final execution is currently set on the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Jan 15). There are two executions taking place during the week of the conference.

What: Human Rights in Crisis: The Federal Execution Spree, a virtual conference

Who: Keynote speakers include Sister Helen Prejean, Amanda Knox and will also feature death row exonerees, family members of those on death row, notable attorneys, clergy, journalists and activists

When: December 6-12 with 1-3 panel discussions per day

Where: The Internet. [See the still-developing agenda, sponsors and speaker list](#)



The Human Rights in Crisis conference is a direct response to Trump's execution spree.



"It's just torture what this does to a body. I've got pictures of what it did to my brothers' body. It was just one more painful piece of the puzzle for our family."

The conference is being held in honor of Bill Pelke, an international human rights icon, who

recently passed away. Ashley Kincaid Eve, founder of The Social Justice Workers, had been organizing the conference with Pelke until his untimely passing.

“This started out as an event that Bill and I were working on together to amplify the horror of what we thought would be the final execution of the Trump administration on International Human Rights Day,” said Eve. “Now five total executions have been scheduled, including one the following day. This is an emergency for our justice system and people need to pay attention.”

The conference has also been convened by Pelke’s organization, the Journey of Hope ...From Violence to Healing, as well as Death Penalty Action (DPA), Indiana Abolition Coalition (IAC) and Terre Haute Death Penalty Resistance. Numerous organizations continue to add their names as co-sponsors.

Abraham Bonowitz, co-founder and director of Death Penalty Action, said the conference is a direct response to the Trump administration’s continued lame duck execution spree and recently announced adjustments to federal regulations governing execution methods and locations. These are the first federal executions under a lame duck administration since 1889, and are especially egregious in light of the pandemic, as all state executions have been halted.

“In some ways, the current death penalty system is the perfect analogy for President Trump as a person,” said Bonowitz. “It’s racist, ineffective, and it’s taking way too long to get rid of it.”

[Death Penalty Action is leading the public-facing effort](#) to oppose federal executions and to ultimately abolish the federal death penalty. The organization was formed in 2017 in anticipation of the Trump administration’s resumption of executions after a 17 year hiatus. When execution dates were set in 2019, DPA became a founding partner of the Terre Haute Death Penalty Resistance network and has helped lead protests outside the federal penitentiary. DPA was also party to a successful lawsuit forcing the Indiana State Police to halt its practice of blocking access to the vicinity of the prison. The organization is committed to providing high visibility resources and other ways to take action for citizens wishing to see an end to executions in the United States.

A resource page created by the organization encourages COVID-19-safe protest activities and features petitions to the President, Congress and President-elect Biden. [DPA leads a coalition of nearly 200 organizations](#) so far in support of death penalty repeal legislation introduced last year by U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) and U.S. Representative Adriano Espaillat (D-NY).

Conference speakers can be made available for comment.

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