

# **Justices reject appeals by death row inmates**

## **Supreme Court move could lead new executions after 7-month hiatus**

WASHINGTON - The Supreme Court cleared the way Monday for Alabama, Mississippi and Texas to set new execution dates for three inmates who were granted last-minute reprieves by the justices last year.

The court on Monday turned down appeals from Thomas Arthur of Alabama, Earl Wesley Berry of Mississippi and Carlton Turner of Texas. The court blocked their executions last fall while it considered a challenge to Kentucky's lethal injection procedures.

The justices said those procedures are not unconstitutionally cruel, a decision that almost certainly will lead to a resumption of executions after a 7-month hiatus.

The high court's last-minute orders temporarily sparing the three inmates automatically expired when the justices denied their appeals Monday.

Seven other death row inmates also lost their appeals Monday, but they had not been facing imminent execution.

The other inmates are: Juan Velazquez in Arizona, Samuel Crowe and Joseph Williams in Georgia, Michael Taylor in Missouri, and Kenneth Biros, Richard Cooley and James Frazier in Ohio.

It is unclear whether they can mount new appeals to stop their executions, although the court's decision last week left the door open to challenging lethal injection procedures in other states where problems with administering the drugs are well documented.

Roughly three dozen states use three drugs in succession to put to sleep, paralyze and kill inmates. Critics of the procedures have said that if the first drug is administered incorrectly or in an insufficient dosage, the inmate could suffer excruciating pain from the other two drugs. But because the second drug is a paralytic, he would be unable to express his discomfort.

The states sought to proceed with the executions of Arthur, Berry and Turner in spite of the high court review in the Kentucky case. The states argued that the men had used up all their appeals.