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Institution:	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
File Number(s):	Report No. 24/81; Case No. 3115
Session:	Fifty-Third Session (22 June – 2 July 1981)
Title/Style of Cause:	Thomas Ransford v. Jamaica
Doc. Type:	Resolution
Decided by:	Chairman: Tom J. Farer; First Vice Chairman: Marco Gerardo Monroy Cabra; Second Vice Chairman: Francisco Bertrand Galindo; Members: Carlos A. Dunshee de Abranches; César Sepúlveda
Dated:	25 June 1981
Citation:	Ransford v. Jam., Case 3115, Inter-Am. C.H.R., Report No. 24/81, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.57, doc. 6 rev. 1 (1980-1981)
Represented by:	APPLICANT: Jane Ford
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## BACKGROUND:

1. On September 31, 1978, Mr. Ransford Thomas, a Jamaican citizen acting on his own behalf, submitted a communication to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in which he stated that on April 18, 1973 he was arrested by the police of Dunham Town and taken to the Police Station of that town for investigation about a murder which had occurred in the Parish of Kingston on April 9, 1973. There, he was interrogated, "beaten and coerced to admit the wrong name of Ransford Thomas", his right name, according to him, being "Ransford James". Charged with the murder of Philip Johnson, he was tried on April 29, 1974, "innocently convicted and sentenced to death the next day on the basis of false testimonies".

2. By letter dated October 12, 1978, the Commission, in accordance with Articles 38, 39 and 54 of the Regulations then in force, requested that the complainant supply additional information to satisfy the requirements of the Regulations.

3. On January 24, 1979, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights sent to the Government of Jamaica the following note:

“The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has received numerous communications regarding alleged violations of rights of Ransford Thomas, accused of murder, who has been tried, convicted and sentenced to death by the tribunals of your country. This individual is at present in the death row of St. Catherine District Prison awaiting the execution of the death penalty imposed upon him. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights requested that the plaintiff furnish some specific and pertinent information to verify not only the legal foundation and justification of his complaint, but also whether the internal legal procedures and remedies of the country have been duly applied and exhausted.

Because of the prevailing circumstances, the plaintiff has not been able to supply the information requested from him, but he has submitted to the Commission the name of a person that could provide such information.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, aware of the possible difficulties that the complainant may encounter to satisfy the requirements of the Regulations, wishes to request the Honorable Government of Your Excellency to supply copies of the notes of evidence of the trial court as well as those of the appeal court if such procedure took place in the case of Ransford Thomas, and any other information which would enable the Commission to determine whether the internal legal procedures and remedies have been exhausted in this case.

This request for information does not constitute a decision as to the admissibility of the communication.”

At the same time, by letter of the same date, the Commission advised Mrs. Jane Ford, legal counsel of Mr. Thomas, of her client's complaint and asked her to supply the Commission with the information requested from the plaintiff, who also was informed of these steps by letter of April 29, 1979.

4. On April 25, 1979, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights transmitted to the Government of Jamaica the pertinent parts of the complaint in accordance with Article 42 of the Regulations then in force and requested that the Government furnish the appropriate information in connection with the communication.

5. By a note of August 30, 1979, the Government of Jamaica replied to the Commission's request and submitted a transcript of the notes of evidence of the Circuit Court trial and copy of the judgment handed down by the Court of Appeal in respect to the application for leave to appeal against the conviction and sentence of the plaintiff. The Commission informed the plaintiff of this submission.

#### WHEREAS:

1. A study of the notes of evidence of the Jamaican Court and the conduct of the trial of Ransford Thomas show that the rules of criminal procedures of Jamaica were observed and that the claimant received a fair trial;

2. Ransford Thomas was assisted by defense counsel;

3. The claimant, responding to the Court inquiry, stated his name as Ransford Thomas not as Ransford James as he had indicated in his communication of April 10, 1979;

4. Ransford Thomas informed the Commission that he lost his appeal on January 27, 1975, and it is therefore apparent that the internal legal remedies have been exhausted.

#### THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLVES:

1. To declare that there exists no evidence of the violation of any of the rights set forth in the American Convention on Human Rights in this case;

2. To communicate this resolution to the Government of Jamaica and to the claimant;

3. To recommend that the Government of Jamaica suspend the execution of those persons sentenced to death and consider the abolition of the death penalty.