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Statement on Federal Government’s Rush to Carry Out Three More Executions in the Midst of Deeply Disturbing National Events

[Fair and Just Prosecution](#) Executive Director Miriam Krinsky issued the following statement today in advance of three executions the federal government is seeking to carry out this week (even as challenges are still pending in the courts), Lisa Montgomery on January 12, Corey Johnson on January 14 and Dustin Higgs on January 15:

“After a 17-year hiatus in federal executions, the Trump administration’s rush to carry out executions is a stain on our country and our humanity. The federal government has put 10 people to death since July, and the administration is seeking to execute three more this week. In the wake of the trauma, loss of life and outrage following last week’s deeply disturbing events – and as thousands of Americans continue to die every day from COVID-19 – the administration inexplicably has determined that executing people is one of its final priorities before leaving office.

The death penalty is an increasingly disavowed form of punishment that disproportionately impacts people of color, risks executing people who are innocent and does nothing to deter crime or improve public safety. After a year that saw communities crying out for a new vision of justice and confidence in law enforcement falling to an [all-time low](#), carrying out additional federal executions during a lame-duck period for the first time in over 100 years will only serve to further erode confidence in the criminal legal system.

While all state killings are wrong, a closer look at the three people the federal government is rushing to execute this week reveals that carrying out these executions would be particularly unjust. Lisa Montgomery – who would be the first woman put to death by the federal government in nearly 70 years – has a [documented history](#) of mental illness and was the victim of significant and sustained physical and sexual abuse from a very young age, very little of which was disclosed to the jury. Corey Johnson experienced immense trauma and violence in his childhood, and his lawyers [argue](#) that he has an intellectual disability, which was never shared at his trial. Dustin Higgs was [sentenced to death](#) even though the state acknowledges that he did not kill anyone himself, and the actual trigger person received a life sentence.

As nearly 100 current and former criminal justice leaders stressed last month in a [joint statement](#) that called on the administration to immediately halt federal executions and commute the sentences of those on death row to life without parole, ‘our nation’s long experiment with the death penalty has failed.... We also now know that we have not executed the worst of the worst, but often instead put to death the unluckiest of the unlucky – the impoverished, the poorly represented, and the most broken.’

The administration can end its time in office by showing, at least in these three cases, that it is capable of valuing fairness, justice and compassion over vengeance – let’s hope they take this last chance to do so.

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Fair and Just Prosecution is a national network of elected prosecutors working towards common-sense, compassionate criminal justice reforms. To learn more about FJP’s work, visit our [website](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).