

## Shurat HaDin Urges Florida Governor to Commute Sentence of Jewish Death Row Prisoner

February 11, 2010: The director of Shurat HaDin - Israel Law Center, Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, has sent an urgent letter to the Governor of Florida, Charlie Crist, pleading with him to spare the life of Martin Grossman, a Jewish American inmate who has spent the last 25 years on death row. If the Governor does not commute his sentence, the State of Florida plans to execute Grossman on Tuesday February 15, 2010.

Grossman was convicted of killing Margaret Parks, a Florida Wildlife Protection Officer, in 1984, when he was 19 years old. The Jewish teenager was reportedly addicted to drugs and suffered from mental limitations at the time. Grossman who was on parole from a burglary conviction, was carrying an unlicensed gun, when the officer surprised him and attempted to place him under arrest. After struggling with the officer and trying to escape, Grossman shot her and fled. An accomplice of Grossman, who was also arrested for his part in the crime, received a mere 3 year sentence.

For the past 25 years Grossman has been on death row awaiting the State of Florida to carry out the sentence. Numerous Jewish groups have begun a campaign to urge the Governor to have Grossman's sentence reduced to a term of life imprisonment, noting how he has reformed himself in prison. The execution of a Jewish prisoner is very rare in the United States.

As Darshan-Leitner has written in her letter to the Governor: "As the unique facts of this case bear out, there is no further public or societal interest that can be served by carrying out the death penalty against Martin that could not just as well be satisfied by commuting his sentence to life imprisonment. After twenty five years, Martin has been morally reformed, his long incarceration serves as a deterrent to others, he is no longer a threat to the public and the Park family can be assured that he will continue to be punished by serving the rest of his life in prison. Taking Martin's life at this stage, after 25 years of incarceration, simply to gain retribution for the loss of the victim's, is plainly cruel and does not advance nor dignify the Florida justice system." For the news story [Click Here](#)