

Fourth plinth appeal for government to help death row Briton

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British woman Linda Carty, who is on death row in Texas. Photograph: Matt Williams/PA

Life-sized cardboard cutout of Linda Carty, sentenced to death by lethal injection in US, will stand in Trafalgar Square

A British woman who is on death row in Texas will today appeal to the government to help her avoid execution via Trafalgar Square's fourth plinth.

Linda Carty, a 50-year-old former primary school teacher, was sentenced to death in 2002 after being convicted of taking part in the murder of 25-year-old Joana Rodriguez.

Her family and campaigners claim she was not properly represented at her original trial and that she is innocent of the crime for which she was convicted.

Carty will "appear" on the London monument as part of the artist Antony Gormley's One & Other Exhibition, using the platform to call on the British public and the government to intervene to help save her from lethal injection.

A life-sized cardboard cutout of her will stand on the platform from 10am until 11am, and a recorded message from her will also be played.

In the message, she says: "Time is now running out, and I appeal to every one of you and to the British government to please help me.

"I'm sorry if I sound like a desperate woman. I am desperate, because the British people may be my last hope. If they ask for my life to be spared, maybe Texas will listen."

Carty has always maintained her innocence, but with her appeal now in its later stages, her execution could be only months away.

Speaking from her prison cell in Texas prison, she said she was hopeful that her appeal – currently lodged with the fifth circuit court of appeals – would be successful.

But she added that her case needed support from influential people, possibly from outside the US.

"Texas doesn't care about clearing my name. It is going to have to come down to either the British government, a member of parliament or a US senator," she said.

She also called on Gordon Brown to raise her case with the US authorities. "He has to," she said. "You cannot sit passively by and, because you have a good relationship with the US, say: 'I don't want to rock the boat.'

"You are talking about somebody's life here. He has to get up and say: 'I am not going to allow you to kill this lady.'"

Clive Stafford Smith, the director of the legal charity Reprieve, said: "Linda Carty's speech to Trafalgar Square shows that she is a terrified woman, and with good reason.

"Texas plans to kill her by lethal injection, which is a painful and lonely death. The British government must do everything in its power to prevent Linda's death."

Earlier this year, the Foreign Office intervened in the legal process, filing an amicus brief to the US appeals court which complained of lack of notification of Carty's original arrest in 2001 and "ineffective counsel".

Carty was born on the Caribbean island of St Kitts to parents from the British overseas territory of Anguilla. She holds a UK dependent territory passport.

As such, her arrest should have been notified to the British embassy under a long-standing agreement.

However, her state-appointed lawyer did not inform her of her right to seek assistance from the British consulate – one of a catalogue of errors, supporters claim.