

The Australian

Supporters of Bali Nine's Scott Rush will campaign for a cut in his life term

- Staff reporters
- From: The Australian
- May 11, 2011 9:21AM



Convicted drug smuggler Scott Rush is led into court. Picture: Sonny Tumbelaka/AFP
Source: AdelaideNow

SUPPORTERS of drug smuggler Scott Rush will continue to push for a reduction in his life prison sentence after an Indonesian appeal court spared him from execution.

Rush's family will also campaign for an overturning of the death sentence for Bali Nine ringleaders Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, who still face the firing squad.

Rush family friend, Father Tim Harris, said the Indonesian court's decision yesterday to commute the drug smuggler's death sentence to life in prison was wonderful but also heartbreaking.

The family's former parish priest said Rush's parents Lee and Christine Rush were relieved, but their son's future remained grim.

"It's sort of bittersweet, isn't it, where there's great news about Scott's situation on the one hand but ongoing pain continues by virtue of the fact that Scott continues to serve a life sentence?" he told the ABC.

Rush's Australian lawyer, Robert Welfare, said his client had now exhausted all legal avenues but is likely to apply for clemency from the Indonesian president.

"I've seen the conditions in Bali prison and I know the conditions that Scott's living in now," he told the ABC.

"That's totally heartbreaking to think that this young man will have to spend the rest of his life in there."

Rush, 25, from Brisbane, had been facing execution for his part in a 2005 plot to smuggle more than eight kilograms of heroin from Bali to Australia.

Indonesian courts in 2006 had upgraded his initial life sentence to the death penalty.

But the Indonesian Supreme Court yesterday cited the fact that Rush had shown remorse for his actions and his age in deciding to restore the life term.

Rush was only 19, and on his first overseas trip, when he was arrested at Ngurah Rai Airport with 1.3kg of heroin strapped to his legs underneath his clothing.

Chan and Sukumaran are also waiting for the outcome of judicial reviews in the hope they will escape the firing squad.

If their appeals fail, they must rely on President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono granting them clemency.

Father Harris said the Rush family was also campaigning on behalf of Chan and Sukumaran.

"They won't be fully satisfied, the family that is, until the two ringleaders are also given a lighter sentence," he said.

"This is the extraordinary couple that we talk about. Scott's mother and father not completely happy unless the two ringleaders in this particular matter are also let off the death penalty and as we know, they are still waiting on a judgment by the Indonesian court."

Rush now joins a number of other members of the drug smuggling plot who are also serving life sentences in Bali's Kerobokan Prison, including Martin Stephens, Matthew Norman, Si Yi Chen, Tan Duc Than Nguyen and Michael Czugaj.

Stephens had his final appeal against a life sentence rejected in January.

The final member of the drug ring, Renae Lawrence, is serving a 20-year sentence, which has already been reduced by almost two years.

Additional reporting: *AAP*