


# U.S. court suspends execution of schizophrenic inmate

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A U.S. appeals court on Wednesday halted the controversial execution of schizophrenic prisoner Scott Panetti, which had been scheduled for this afternoon in Texas, ruling that there are "complex legal questions" in the case.

The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, which has jurisdiction over Texas, decided to stay the execution to be able to examine in detail the complex legal questions surrounding the case.

Panetti, who according to medical reports suffers from schizophrenia, in 1992 killed his in-laws and kidnapped his wife and 3-year-old daughter in the Texas town of Fredericksburg. He was arrested a few hours later.

During his 1995 trial, he defended himself dressed as a cowboy and tried to call more than 200 witnesses, including former President John F. Kennedy, Pope John Paul II and Jesus Christ.

Since then, he has been hospitalized for psychosis and delusions on multiple occasions.

His attorneys, Greg Wiercioch and Kathryn Kase, while acknowledging their client's deeds, issued a statement in which they said the court ruling is the first step in a process that will clearly show that Panetti suffers from severe mental illness that makes him ineligible for the death penalty.

The case has attracted the attention of prominent figures and organizations, including the United Nations, which on Tuesday asked the United States to halt his execution. EFE