

Convicted Pa. cop killer in appeals court

by UPI

PHILADELPHIA -- A U.S. appellate court in Philadelphia Thursday reviewed the death sentence of former radio reporter Mumia Abu-Jamal for killing a police officer. Abu-Jamal, 53, was convicted in 1982 of killing police Officer Daniel Faulkner, and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld the conviction and death sentence in 1989.

If the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upholds the state courts, an execution date could be set soon, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported.

At the heart of the case is a recommendation made by U.S. District Judge William H. Yohn Jr., who said Abu-Jamal should have been sentenced to life, the Inquirer said.

Defense lawyers argued Abu-Jamal did not receive a fair trial in 1982 because the jury was predominantly white and the prosecution knowingly excluded black jurors. No decision is expected from the appeals court for several months.

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