

AI INDEX: AMR 46/01/97

28 JANUARY 1997 -- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PERU: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REITERATES CALL FOR SAFE AND IMMEDIATE
RELEASE OF MRTA HOSTAGES

The protracted holding of some 70 hostages by the *Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru* (MRTA), Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, is totally unacceptable and is unequivocally condemned by Amnesty International, the organization said today.

Amnesty International reiterated its appeal to the MRTA and the Peruvian authorities to bring about a prompt solution to the hostage crisis.

“This solution should continue to aim at the quick and safe release of all the hostages currently held in the residence of Japan’s Ambassador to Peru,” Amnesty International said.

“The taking of the hostages violates one of the fundamental principles enshrined in international humanitarian standards.” Amnesty International believes it also constitutes a sustained act of cruel treatment.

The human rights organization also expressed profound concern at the fact that on 16 January the authorities suspended all visits to prisoners accused or convicted of having links to the MRTA. The measure -- which includes visits by the prisoners’ lawyers and relatives -- effectively places these prisoners in a situation of incommunicado detention.

“This compounds a long-standing failure by the authorities to comply with international and regional human rights treaties, including the fundamental right to a fair trial -- which has led to hundreds of prisoners being falsely accused or convicted of terrorism-related offences,” Amnesty International said.

“Hostage taking and other grave human rights abuses by the armed opposition can never justify the violation by the authorities of fundamental human rights.”

...ENDS/