

URGENT ACTION

AMNESTY LAW PASSED IN SURINAME

The National Assembly has voted in favour of an amendment to Suriname's 1992 amnesty law. This may stop the trial of the current president, who has been charged with extrajudicial executions carried out in December 1982.

The 1992 law already gave amnesty for criminal offences linked to the defence of the state if they were committed between 1985 and 1989. Under the new amendment, the amnesty period now extends from April 1980 to August 1992: this covers the extrajudicial execution of 15 opponents of the then military government in December 1982. President Dési Bouterse was the country's ruler at the time.

The new amnesty law denies the families of victims their right to justice, truth and reparation. It will also prevent any future investigations into complaints of crimes under international law and gross human rights violations committed between 1980 and 1992. The trial of Dési Bouterse and 24 others, before a military court, is supposed to resume on 13 April, when the court is expected to decide on the implementation and the effect of the new amnesty law on the judicial process.

After three days of debate at the National Assembly in the capital, Paramaribo, on 4 April members of the National Assembly voted 28-12 in favour of an amendment to the 1992 amnesty law. The bill was signed by the Vice-President, Robert Ameerali, on 6 April and became law the same day.

Amnesty International will be closely monitoring the situation and will take further action as appropriate.

No further action requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the first update of UA 98/12. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR48/001/2012/en>

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