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MEDIA ADVISORY

Amnesty International has sent a message to Mr. Edmundo Pérez Yoma, the Chilean Minister of Defence, expressing concern regarding information which shows that the whereabouts of conscript Pedro Javier Soto Tapia, 18 years of age, who was serving obligatory military service in the Yungay de San Felipe Regiment in the V Region, have been unknown since 15 December 1996.

In its letter, Amnesty International has also expressed grave concern regarding accusations of ill-treatment and excessive punishments suffered by Pedro Javier Soto Tapia and other conscripts. Amnesty International has asked for a guarantee that a swift and impartial investigation will be carried out to establish the identity of human remains found on 15 March last and to discover the whereabouts of Pedro Javier Soto Tapia.

Amnesty International has stated that it is confident that the chain-of-command of the Armed Forces will receive strict orders reiterating that the norms of human rights are applicable to military circles and that cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of recruits, as well as any other violation of human rights, will be punished in accordance with the law.

We are attaching hereto a copy of the text of the letter addressed to the Minister of Defence which you are free to publish immediately.

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