

News Service 212/98

AI INDEX: AMR 22/17/98
30 OCTOBER 1998

Spanish Court upholds justice and truth – simple principles to be upheld by all nations

Amnesty International welcomed reports that the Spanish National Court (*Audiencia Nacional*) today decided that it had jurisdiction to try crimes against humanity committed during the military governments in Chile and Argentina (1973-1990 and 1976-1983 respectively).

“Today, the relatives of victims of human rights violations have received new hope in their battle for truth and justice,” Amnesty International said today.

With this decision the Spanish National Court has reaffirmed the fundamental rule of international law that all states have universal jurisdiction to bring to justice those responsible for crimes against humanity. This principle applies regardless of whether they are heads of state or other public officials. This is a principle of international law which has been universally recognized since the judgement of the international Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1946.

“Perhaps now there is finally hope that all persons responsible for crimes against humanity no matter what their rank will be brought to justice,” Amnesty International added.

ENDS.../