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ECUADOR: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR INVESTIGATION INTO TRIAL PROCEEDINGS

Amnesty International is concerned that evidence obtained under torture has been used in trial proceedings against seven people.

The seven detainees, accused of responsibility for an attack on an army patrol navigating the Putumayo river, in which 11 soldiers were killed, were forced under torture to sign self-incriminating statements, according to credible and consistent reports received by Amnesty International.

"We are concerned that the Ecuadorean judiciary is admitting as admissible evidence, self-incriminating statements obtained during or as a result of torture or ill-treatment," Amnesty International said. "It is contravening human rights standards, which it ratified."

The court accepts that torture took place only at the time of the detainees arrest. However Amnesty International has received information which indicates that the detainees were not only brutally tortured by members of the army; they were left in incommunicado detention for between eight to 11 days and then transferred to the police, where they were reportedly forced, under renewed torture and threats, to sign self-incriminating statements.

On 21 March, Amnesty International wrote to Dr Glauco Salazar, President of the Supreme Court of Justice, expressing the organization's concern at the possibility that the court could accept such confessions as the main evidence .

Amnesty International is calling for an impartial investigation into these reports of torture which will result in bringing to justice those found responsible. It also urges that any evidence found to have been based on torture is dismissed by the court.

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