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PERU: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGES AUTHORITIES TO EXTEND COMMISSION CHARGED WITH RECOMMENDING PRESIDENTIAL PARDON FOR PRISONERS

Amnesty International has issued a public communique urging the Peruvian authorities to extend the mandate of the Commission charged with recommending to President Alberto Fujimori that he pardon prisoners falsely accused of terrorism, thereby bringing about their release. The Commission's initial period of work is due to formally end within the next few days.

"Hundreds of men and women remain in prison despite having been falsely accused of terrorism," Amnesty International said.

The organization pointed out that extending the mandate of the Commission would be a just measure, since President Fujimori himself has indicated, during his recent visit to London, that "some 200 innocent prisoners still remained in jail".

"The Peruvian authorities will have taken an important step in favour of human rights, once there is not a single person in prison for having been falsely accused of terrorism," the human rights organization emphasized. "Amnesty International will not cease in its efforts until all these prisoners are released," concluded the organization.

Background

The Commission charged with recommending to President Fujimori that he pardon or show clemency to prisoners falsely accused of terrorism was established by the Peruvian authorities in August 1996. In October 1996 Amnesty International warmly welcomed the release of 31 prisoners who benefitted from a presidential pardon. Since the Commission came into effect 110 men and women falsely accused of terrorism have been pardoned or granted clemency.

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