

EXTERNAL

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Fear for safety

20 March 1997

PERU Javier Diez Canseco (congressman)

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Javier Diez Canseco, congressman for *Izquierda Unida*, United Left, an opposition party. According to information received, on 19 March 1997, Javier Diez Canseco's car was shot at by a group of armed men. The congressman's chauffeur and bodyguard were taking a friend of his to the international airport in the capital, Lima. Javier Diez Canseco was not in the car at the time.

The three victims of the attack have stated that six heavily-armed men, wearing bullet-proof vests, fired shots at the car causing it to stop. The bodyguard was reportedly shot in the leg during the attack. The armed men then took control of the car and drove its occupants to another part of Lima, where they interrogated and later released them. The assailants have apparently kept the car.

According to press reports, Javier Diez Canseco has stated that his chauffeur, bodyguard and friend were told by the assailants that they were policemen.

Javier Diez Canseco was one of the persons in the Japanese Ambassador's residence on 17 December 1996, when an armed opposition group, the *Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru* (MRTA), Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, took over the building and held at least 700 guests and staff hostage. Javier Diez Canseco was released a few days later. He has publicly stated that he is in favour of the negotiation of a peace accord between the Government of Peru and the MRTA.

Javier Diez Canseco has apparently declared that he does not wish the attack to be linked to the hostage crisis, but has urged the Minister of the Interior, retired army general Juan Briones Dávila, for a public explanation.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Javier Diez Canseco has been active over the years in denouncing and investigating human rights violations by the security forces and abuses by the MRTA and the *Partido Comunista del Perú (Sendero Luminoso)*, Communist Party of Peru (Shining Path), another armed opposition group in Peru. As a result he has frequently been the target of harassment and death threats.

The vast majority of human rights violations by members of the security forces, including thousands of cases of "disappearance", extrajudicial execution and torture, documented since the early 1980s, have remained unresolved. This pattern of impunity was legalised through an amnesty law passed in June 1995. Javier Diez Canseco was one of a number of opposition parliamentarians who subsequently filed a draft bill before Congress calling for this law to be repealed, and for a "truth commission" to be established. The bill was never debated.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Congressman Javier Diez Canseco;
- urging the authorities to take all necessary measures to guarantee his safety;
- urging the authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough and independent investigation into the attack on Javier Diez Canseco's car and its occupants

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on 19 March 1997, to make the findings public, and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of the Interior  
General EP (r) Juan Briones Dávila  
Ministro del Interior  
Ministerio del Interior  
Plaza 30 de Agosto 150  
San Isidro  
Urb. Córpac  
Lima 27  
PERU  
**Fax: + 511 2242407**

**COPIES TO:**

Human rights organization  
APRODEH  
Jr. Pachacutec 980  
Jesús María  
Lima 11  
PERU

and to diplomatic representatives of PERU accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 May 1997.