

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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"Disappearance"

4 March 1991

PERU: Isaac GUZMAN CASANOVA, aged 41

Amnesty International is concerned about the reported "disappearance" of health worker Isaac Guzmán Casanova, aged 41, after detention by members of the army.

According to reports, in the early hours of 27 January 1991 soldiers from the Sión military base, near the boundary of the Tocache and Mariscal Cáceres provinces, San Martín department, entered a house located in the hamlet of Sión, Campanilla district, province of Mariscal Cáceres, and detained health worker Isaac Guzmán (whose official Identity No. is L.E. 01004953). He was reportedly taken to the Sión military base. When Isaac Guzmán's mother approached the base to obtain information on her son, the military authorities refused to acknowledge her son's detention.

The detention of Isaac Guzmán was denounced by his relatives to the Provincial Attorney of Mariscal Cáceres, and a writ of habeas corpus was filed before a judge in the same province. The Provincial Attorney is reported to have requested access to the military base where Isaac Guzmán is believed to be held but was denied access.

Although the detainee's relatives reportedly received messages from soldiers stationed at the barracks indicating Isaac Guzmán is alive, the army authorities continue to deny his detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For the last eight years Amnesty International has received numerous reports of incommunicado and unacknowledged detentions from Peru, some of which have led to "disappearances". Most of them have occurred in rural areas and have been carried out by uniformed members of the security forces, who often refuse to acknowledge the detentions. Many of those detained by the armed forces "disappear" indefinitely; others are released after days or weeks in secret custody, during which time they may be subjected to torture. Sometimes their detention is acknowledged, after prolonged secret detention and interrogation.

In these cases detentions are only acknowledged to have occurred as of the date they are transferred from military to police custody, when public prosecutors are informed of them. The armed forces as a rule never acknowledge having held prisoners prior to their transfer to the police. This is a major contributing factor to the continuing practice of torture and "disappearance".

Human rights violations take place in a context of increasingly violent activities by armed opposition groups, especially "Sendero Luminoso", which has claimed responsibility for hundreds of execution-style killings of government officials, leaders of political parties and members of peasant communities believed to have cooperated with the armed forces.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern about the reported detention of Isaac Guzmán Casanova by soldiers of the Sión military base;
- asking that his detention be acknowledged and that while in detention he be humanely treated and given access to a lawyer, a doctor and his relatives;
- expressing concern that his detention has reportedly been denied and that he may "disappear";
- asking that he be promptly charged and brought before a competent court or immediately released;
- expressing concern that the Provincial Attorney has reportedly been denied access to the Sión military base.

APPEALS TO:

Presidente Alberto Fujimori
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Gobierno
 Plaza de Armas
 Lima 1, Peru

Telegrams: Presidente Fujimori, Lima, Peru
 Telexes: 20167 PE PALACIO
 20331 PE SEC PRE
 Faxes: + 51 14 33 1945

General Jorge Torres Aciego
 Ministro de Defensa
 Ministerio de Defensa
 Avenida Boulevard s/n
 Monterrico
 Lima 33, Peru

Telexes: 25438 COMGREGJ
 Faxes: + 51 14 33 4470

Sr Jefe del Comando Político-Militar
 Comandancia General del Ejército
 Camp. Mariscal Cáceres, en Morales-Tarapoto
 San Martín, Peru

Telegrams: Comando Político-Militar, Camp mariscal
 Cáceres, San Martín, Peru

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Peru in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat or your section office if sending appeals after 15 April 1991.