

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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"Disappearance"

7 March 1991

PERU: Edith PINEDO NAVARRO (f)
Isabel VELA CHAVEZ (f), aged 17

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Edith Pinedo Navarro and Isabel Vela Chávez following their reported "disappearance". Both women were reportedly detained on 10 February 1991 by members of the marine infantry in different parts of Coronel Portillo province, Ucayali department.

According to reports, Edith Pinedo Navarro was detained on the morning of 10 February in the Ucayali shanty town. Her detention has been denounced to the Provincial Prosecutor in Coronel Portillo.

Reports indicate that Isabel Vela Chávez, aged 17, was also detained the same day in the hamlet of Busaya, on the Tamaya river.

On the same day as the above detentions, 17 others were detained in the area in what appears to have been a coordinated operation by the marine infantry, and taken to the marines base located in the city of Pucallpa. Among them were Isabel Velas's father and brother. All 15? were subsequently released on 12 February. Amnesty International believes that Edith Pinedo and Isabel Vela may also have been taken to the same base. The authorities at the marine's base have refused to acknowledge the detentions of the women.

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 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 "disappearance" of Edith Pinedo Navarro and Isabel Vela Chávez by members of the marine infantry in Coronel Portillo Province, Ucayali department;
- urging that their whereabouts and legal situation be immediately clarified;
- urging that while in detention they be humanely treated and given access to a lawyer, a doctor and their relatives.

APPEALS TO:

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

Telegrams: Presidente Fujimori, Lima, Perú
Telexes: 20167 PE PALACIO or 20331 PE SEC PRE
Faxes: + 51 14 33 7020

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

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa Torres, Lima, Perú
Telexes: 25438 PE COMGREGJ
Faxes: + 51 14 35 9997

COPIES TO:

Señores
CEAS
Apartado 363
Lima 1, PERU

and 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 18 April 1991.