

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 46/17/94
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Date: 10 October 1994

MEDICAL CONCERN

**Santosa LAYME BEJAR
PERU**

Santosa Layme Bejar is a community health care worker who was arrested on 26 February 1994 in the shanty town of San Juan de Lurigancho in Lima, the capital. She has been involved in women and children's health care projects in her community and is well known locally. She also helped to set up the *Vaso de Leche* program in the district, a community kitchen which helps to feed those in need.

Santosa Layme has been accused of collaborating with the clandestine armed opposition group, Communist Party of Peru (PCP) (*Partido Comunista del Perú*) - the Maoist "Shining Path". Amnesty International believes, however, that the charges are groundless and has adopted Santosa Layme as a prisoner of conscience. She has publicly denounced the aims and methods of the armed opposition on a number of occasions and Amnesty International has received information suggesting that she was falsely named by a PCP member as a collaborator.

A few months prior to her detention, Santosa Layme received a letter from the PCP threatening her with death if she did not provide them with food from the *Vaso de Leche* programme in San Juan de Lurigancho. She went to a police station locally to report the incident, but was barred from entry by a policeman guarding the door who is reported to have refused to accompany her to the shanty town unless she had money to pay for a taxi.

Santosa Layme is reported to have repeatedly made her opposition to the activities of the armed opposition publicly known and in October 1991 participated in a march for peace organized in her district in response to the killing of two community leaders. The PCP has repeatedly harassed, threatened and killed leaders of popular organizations who have opposed its activities. The charges against Santosa Layme are based solely on an accusation made by a detained PCP member that she was involved in a PCP support network in Lima. She is currently held in Chorrillos High Security Prison for Women in Lima and has been charged under Peru's current anti-terrorism laws.

Background

In the latter half of 1992, President Alberto Fujimori and his Council of Ministers ruled Peru by decree law and a new set of wide-ranging anti-terrorism decrees were issued. The laws widened the definition of terrorism-related crimes, granted the police virtually unlimited pre-trial powers and lengthened the terms of imprisonment for those convicted. In January 1993 the laws were ratified by the newly elected Congress and, although some amendments were subsequently made, they still fall short of international human rights standards. In the period

since the introduction of the laws thousands of Peruvians have been imprisoned on suspicion of involvement in terrorism-related crimes - some official estimates put the figure at approximately 7,600. Independent human rights organizations have identified at least 250 of these prisoners as having been falsely accused of such crimes; others active in the human rights field claim there may be many more. Between May 1992, when the decree laws were first issued, and September 1994 Amnesty International has adopted 63 prisoners of conscience of whom 32 have been released.

Amnesty International believes Santosa Layme to be wrongly accused and is seeking her immediate and unconditional release from prison.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Americas
Date: 10 October 1994

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

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PERU**

Keywords

Theme: POC

Profession/association: community health care worker

Summary

Santosa Layme Bejar is a community health care worker who has been accused of collaborating with the armed opposition. Amnesty International believes these charges to be unfounded and has adopted Santosa Layme as a prisoner of conscience.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals, particularly nurses, to the addresses below:

- raising the case of Santosa Layme Bejar who was detained in San Juan de Lurigancho district, Lima, in February this year
- noting reports that she was falsely named as a PCP collaborator by a detained PCP member and that she was in fact known to have publicly expressed her opposition to the activities of the PCP
- urging her immediate and unconditional release from prison

Address

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Presidente de la República del Perú
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Peru

Copies to:

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(human rights organization)