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PERU: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ALARMED AT MRTA TAKING OF HOSTAGES

Amnesty International today expressed its alarm and concern for the fate of at least 200 hostages taken captive on 17 December by the armed opposition group *Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru*, MRTA, Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement. The hostages are being held at the residence of Japan's Ambassador to Peru in Lima.

"Amnesty International welcomes the prompt release of women and the elderly hostages, but insists that the MRTA must fully respect the safety and physical integrity of all the remaining hostages," the human rights organization said.

The organization also urges the MRTA and the Peruvian authorities to bring about a solution designed to ensure the prompt and safe release of the hostages.

The hostages, including Peruvian parliamentarians and members of the Government as well as foreign diplomats and businessmen, were taken captive by an MRTA unit which broke into the home of the Japanese Ambassador during a reception commemorating Emperor Akihito's birthday. The captors, who are demanding the release of all MRTA members currently held in Peruvian prisons, have threatened to kill the hostages unless their demands are met.

The MRTA initiated a campaign of attacks during the first half of the 1980s. Throughout its campaign, the MRTA has committed serious human rights abuses, including the killing of civilians and taking of hostages. Amnesty International unequivocally condemns such abuses, and reiterates its appeal for the MRTA to fully abide by internationally recognised humanitarian standards.

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