

# amnesty international news release

53 Theobald's Road London WC1X 8SP Tel: 01-404 5831 Telegrams: Amnesty London Secretary General: MARTIN ENNALS

Embargoed for:  
22.00 gmt Monday  
28 July 1975

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHES DETAILS OF TORTURE IN URUGUAY IN STRONG ATTACK ON SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN COUNTRY

Amnesty International today (Monday 28 July 1975) charged the government of President Juan Maria Bordaberry of Uruguay with the systematic arrest and torture of dissenters in the country.

The strong attack coincided with the issuing by Amnesty International of a survey of the regime's violent suppression of peaceful political dissent in Uruguay in the last four months, including its widespread use of torture.

Among the detailed cases of torture included in the survey are those of a detainee who jumped from a police station window after witnessing another detainee collapse and die following semi-asphyxiation under -water, and of a young girl whose naked body was returned to her family only a :few hours after her arrest by military authorities.

Violations of human rights have increased sharply in the two years since the military coup of 27 June 1973 that led to the dissolution of Congress and the banning of all left-of-center political parties, Amnesty International said in a statement.

"Any criticism of, or opposition to, the armed forces is labelled as subversion and carries with it arbitrary arrest--with total lack of legal safeguards and with maltreatment and torture-and heavy prison sentences," the statement said.

"Recently, the situation has become such that there is apparent chaos in the system of repression. This chaos has led to the immediate arrest of persons granted unconditional release by a judge, to the arrest of relatives when the wanted person has not been found and to arrests on the basis of anonymous denunciations."

AI said that recent new decrees not only violated Uruguay's constitution but opened up "a Pandora's box for police and military patrols who have become used to unrestricted and uncontrolled powers of detention and treatment of detainees" who "are at the total mercy of the arresting police or military unit".

It said that all newspapers voicing any criticism of government policies had been closed and that the judiciary had failed to carry out its duty to protect the infringement of the rights of citizens.

The Amnesty International survey details the dismissal of teachers from their jobs; committing to trial of persons for distributing leaflets and for singing the national anthem and putting particular emphasis on the words of it that say "tremble, tyrants"; incommunicado detention for months, often in grossly overcrowded places, such as an old railway carriage; forced standing for up to 60 hours; and torture that includes beating around the body, immersion in water until semi-asphyxiation ("the submarine"), electric shocks, fake executions and other forms of psychological torture.

"While purporting to defend the country's institutions, the Uruguayan authorities are destroying these very institutions," the Amnesty International statement said.

"While claiming to defend the rights of individuals, they are continuously violating human rights. While undertaking to introduce measures to uphold legality, they commit flagrant breaches of the constitution and of internationally accepted legal concepts. While claiming to defend the country against totalitarian doctrines, the government is ruling by decree and creating a totalitarian state where the most basic freedoms are suppressed."

Embargoed for: 22.00 gmt Monday

28 July 1975

Attached: Repression of Human Rights in Uruguay over the past four months: an Amnesty International survey

*For further information telephone MARK GRANTHAM 01-404 5831 (nights and weekends) 01-467 4549*

Amnesty International is an independent, non-governmental organization which has consultative status with the United Nations and the Council of Europe. It endeavours to ensure the right for everyone to hold and express his beliefs. Amnesty International works, irrespective of political considerations, for the release of men and women who are in prison because of their beliefs, or their ethnic origin, colour or language, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence