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Peru: New government must deal with past human rights violations

On the third anniversary of the publication of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report, Amnesty International urged the new government to develop and implement at long last a comprehensive plan of action to comply with the Commission's recommendations, including those recommendations to guarantee the rights of the victims to truth and justice.

The human rights organization welcomed the recently issued Regulations for the payment of compensation to the victims of the human rights violations, Reglamento del Plan Integral de Reparaciones, and the commitment made by the new government to proceed with reparations, but regretted the slow progress made in the investigation and trials of members of the armed forces accused of committing human rights violations.

Amnesty International warned that failing to deal appropriately with Peru's tragic past will only create a climate in which new human rights violations can flourish and reminded the Peruvian government that it has the duty to collaborate in all investigations into human rights violations, and must ensure the progress of investigations guaranteeing that military institutions surrender all relevant information to the judicial authorities. In addition, all those involved in judicial processes must be supported and protected.

Scores of witnesses, lawyers, forensic doctors and human rights campaigners were threatened and intimidated between July 2005 and March 2006 and to date these cases have not been effectively investigated nor have the victims given adequate protection. The new government has the responsibility to guarantee the protection of witnesses, lawyers, forensic doctors involved in investigations into military personnel suspected of involvement in human rights abuses during the internal armed conflict (1980-2000). The new government must also ensure that human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate work without fear of reprisals.

Background Information

Established in 2001, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's mandate was to establish the circumstances surrounding the human rights violations and abuses committed between May 1980 and November 2000 by the Peruvian State, Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) and the MRTA (Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amará).

In addition, the Commission was to establish the whereabouts, identity and situation of the victims of the internal conflict and far as possible, those responsible, to develop proposals for reparation of the victims and suggest measures and reforms to prevent such incidents from re-occurring.

The Truth Commission documented nearly 24,000 cases of people who died or “disappeared” during the internal armed conflict in Peru and thousand of cases of grave human rights violations and abuses, including torture, cruel inhuman and degrading treatment, sexual violence against women, violations of due process, kidnap and hostage taken and violations of human rights of children and indigenous people.

The Commission also made recommended to the Peruvian government to guarantee the rights of victims to truth, justice and reparation.