

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASE 21 December 2001 AI Index: AMR 13/024/2001 Public News Service Number: 227 **ARGENTINA: Fundamental human rights must be fully respected** Lifting the state of emergency is a positive first step towards restoring full respect for human rights in the critical situation Argentina is currently living through, Amnesty International said today. "It is now imperative to put an end to arbitrary detentions, clarify doubts regarding the possible excessive use of force by the security forces and ensure that all future police operations are carried out within the framework of the law," added the organization. Following reports that more than 20 people were killed in the disturbances which have convulsed Argentina in the last few days, Amnesty International today reiterated its call for an urgent and thorough investigation into the circumstances of all the deaths. In a letter sent today to acting President Ramon Puerta, the organization also urged the Argentinian authorities to order the immediate and unconditional release of hundreds of peaceful demonstrators detained arbitrarily. In its letter Amnesty International also stressed the need to determine whether the security forces responsible for maintaining public order have complied with international standards which regulate and impose strict limits on the use of force, including in emergency situations. "We are particularly concerned about the behaviour of the police forces in the context of demonstrations in the centre of Buenos Aires, where indications suggest excessive use of force by law enforcement officials," said the organization. According to reports, during demonstrations around the Plaza de Mayo the security forces fired rubber bullets and threw tear gas grenades at the crowds, including at peaceful demonstrators. Five people were killed. *****For more information, please contact the Amnesty International Press Office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5562 Amnesty International, 1 Easton St, London WC1X 0DW