

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: AMR 18/016/2003 (Public)  
News Service No: 247  
27 October 2003

## **Bolivia: Real political will is required for the future of human rights.**

### **Published**

In a letter addressed to the President of Bolivia, Sr. Carlos Mesa Gisbert, Amnesty International called once more upon the authorities to take concrete measures for a prompt resolution of the human rights crisis that is rocking the country.

"The process to resolve this current crisis must be guided by international human rights principles," said Amnesty International. "The new authorities must recognise that the roots of the crisis lie in the violations of the economic, social and cultural rights of the country's marginalized sectors."

In the letter, Amnesty International urged the new administration to carry out exhaustive investigations into the deaths of more than 80 people at the hands of the security forces during the public demonstrations of the last few weeks.

"These violations of international human rights standards must be exhaustively and conclusively investigated through the civil justice system," said Amnesty International. "Many intergovernmental organisations have stated that prosecuting members of the armed forces accused of human rights violations through the military courts is incompatible with international human rights standards."

The organisation also urged the authorities to take concrete measures with regard to the many complaints of torture and mistreatment of detainees at the hands of members of the security forces, and with regard to the prison conditions, which constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

"The new authorities have a duty to provide all members of the security forces with appropriate training in national and international human rights legislation and the means for its protection," said Amnesty International.

The organisation also expressed deep concern at Bolivia's failure to comply with the international human rights standards to which the country is a party.

"These violations include a failure to exhaustively, independently and conclusively investigate complaints of human rights violations and the threats and attacks that have taken place against human rights defenders," Amnesty International stressed.

The organisation also expressed its concern at the bilateral agreement signed by Bolivia with the United States of America in relation to the International Criminal Court, giving impunity to US nationals accused by that Court of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Amnesty International urged the new administration to refuse to sign this agreement, which is in violation of Bolivia's obligations contracted under international law, including its obligations as a State party to the Rome Statute.

"A large number of measures need to be taken if human rights protection and promotion is to be effectively extended within the country. Some of these measures will require administrative directives, others the introduction of new legislation, many more the mere implementation of that which is already enshrined in Bolivian legislation. All, however, will require political will at all levels," concluded Amnesty International.

**If you require a full copy of the letter sent to the Bolivian authorities, please contact Amnesty International's Press Office.**

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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