

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 22/13/96

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Further information on EXTRA 160/96 (AMR 22/11/96, 23 October 1996) - Fear of total Impunity / Legal concern

CHILE Supreme Court rejects military petition to end legal proceedings on past human rights violations

On 31 October 1996, the Supreme Court of Justice rejected the petition made by the Military Prosecutor to instruct all appeal courts to close legal proceedings to human rights violations committed before March 1978, during the military government. In a majority vote of 14 of the 15 Supreme Court members, the ruling re-established the independence of the judiciary:

"...los jueces son independientes para resolver ... las causas sometidas a su conocimiento, sin que a este respecto sean admisibles ingerencias externas - emanadas desde otras sedes distintas del Poder Judicial mismo - ni tampoco internas provenientes de sus superiores jerárquicos..."

"...judges are independent to decide... on cases within their jurisdiction: in this regard, any external influences, from sources other than the judiciary, and internal influences from higher authorities... are inadmissible."

No further action by the UA Network is requested at this stage. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. Human rights organizations in Chile greatly welcomed Amnesty International's action on this issue.