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**PERUPolitical prisoners in high security prisons**

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Amnesty International is concerned that the Peruvian authorities may use excessive force to quell hunger strikes by more than 600 political prisoners, the majority of them from Castro Castro Prison in Lima, Peru, which began on 11 February. The authorities have used excessive force amounting to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment to suppress uprisings in the past and prisoners have been killed in the process.

The political prisoners are demanding among other things: the annulment of current "anti-terrorism" legislation which permits trial on charges of treason in military courts and does not conform to international fair trial standards; new fair trials and speeding up the judicial process so that prisoners are not held for years without their trial being completed. The prisoners are also demanding the closure of two prisons. Yanamayo prison in Puno department and Challapalca prison, which is located at over 4,600 metres above sea level, also in Puno department.

Conditions in Challapalca prison amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. It is extremely cold and its inaccessibility seriously limits the prisoners' right to maintain contact with relatives, lawyers and their families. Over the last few months, Amnesty International has received reports that scores of political prisoners have been transferred to the Challapalca Prison, which the organisation the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and others believe should be permanently closed.

Amnesty International has received information of excessive use of force against political prisoners. According to reports, Lori Berenson, Nancy Gilvonio and other political prisoners were ill-treated by police officers as they were transferred from the Chorrillos Maximum Security Prison for women in Lima to Cajamarca Prison in Cajamarca Department, on 21 December 2001. At least six tear gas bombs were reportedly used against the prisoners and Lori Berenson has subsequently filed a complaint of sexual abuse against the police officers involved in the transfer. On 22 January, Amnesty International wrote to the Peruvian authorities, expressing serious concern on their handling of the transference of these political prisoners.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has urged the Peruvian authorities to abolish the "anti-terrorism" law since it came into effect in 1992 and to provide a fair trial for all political prisoners.

Since 2000 when the government of President Fujimori started to crumble, inmates in high security prisons have organized hunger strikes and staged uprisings. The situation in high security prisons has begun to look critical since then.

In 1986 and 1992, the Peruvian authorities used excessive force amounting to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment to suppress uprisings in high security prisons. In June 1986, at three Lima area prisons at least two hundred political prisoners were killed and some of the survivors tortured.

In May 1992, after the Peruvian authorities regained control of two wings of the Castro Castro Prison in Lima, at least 39 political prisoners and two

policemen were killed. The authorities claimed the inmates died as a result of an armed confrontation or were deliberately killed by fellow inmates to prevent them from surrendering. Political prisoners who survived claimed that at least ten of the victims were killed after surrendering to the police.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:**

- urging the authorities to restrain from using excessive force in high security prisons;
- urging the authorities to ensure that police officers do not torture or ill-treat the detainees;
- urging the authorities to continue to ensure that the prisoners have access to medical care should they require it;
- urging the authorities to abolish the "anti-terrorism" legislation which came into effect in 1992 and to provide a fair trial for all political prisoners

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Interior

Señor Fernando Miguel Rospigliosi  
Ministro del Interior  
Ministerio del Interior  
Plaza 30 de Agosto s/n  
Urb. Córpac, San Isidro  
Lima 27  
PERÚ

**Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Lima 27, Peru**

**Fax: +511 224 2405**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro**

Minister of Justice

Señor Fernando Olivera Vega  
Ministro de Justicia  
Ministerio de Justicia  
Scipión Llona 350  
Miraflores  
Lima 18  
PERÚ

**Telegrams: Ministro de Justicia, Lima 18, Peru**

**Fax: +511 422 3577**

**Salutation: Sr. Minister**

President of the National Penitentiary Institute

Dr. Luis Javier Bustamante Rodríguez  
Presidente del Consejo Penitenciario  
Instituto Nacional Penitenciario  
Jr. Carabaya 456  
Lima 1  
PERÚ

**Telegrams: Presidente del Consejo Penitenciario, Lima 1, Peru**

**Fax: + 511 427 0624**

**Salutation: Sr. Presidente**

**COPIES TO:**

Human Rights Organization

Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos

Jr. Túpac Amaru 2467

Lince

Lima 14,

PERU

**Tel/fax: + 51 1 441 1533 (if voice, ask "me da tono de fax, por favor")**

**Fax: + 51 1 422 4827**

and to diplomatic representatives of Peru accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 April 2002.