Prisoner of conscience/arbitrary detention/torture

PERUJosé Mercedes SÁNCHEZ TORRES - deputy mayor
Dulio Florián PACHAS

José Mercedes Sánchez Torres, deputy mayor (*teniente alcalde*) for the district of Imperial, in the province of Cañete, Lima department, is in the custody of the DINCOTE, Peru's anti-terrorism police. He was detained on 10 February 1999 in the town of Imperial and has been accused of terrorism. Amnesty International believes the accusation to be false and that he is therefore arbitrarily detained. The organization has declared him to be a prisoner of conscience and is requesting his immediate and unconditional release.

José Sánchez has been an active community leader since 1980. For many years he was a member of the legally registered political party United Left, *Izquierda Unida*, which has publicly condemned the use of political violence by Peru's armed opposition groups (*grupos alzado en armas*). Between 1990 and 1992 he was an alderman (*regidor*) for his district and in 1994 and 1997 stood as a candidate for mayor (*alcalde*). Despite receiving numerous death threats from Shining Path, *Sendero Luminoso*, Peru's main armed opposition group, throughout his political career José Sánchez has actively condemned the violent methods of Shining Path and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Party, *Partido Revolucionario Túpac Amaru* (MRTA), another Peruvian armed opposition group.

Dulio Florián Pachas, who knows José Sánchez, is also in the custody of the DINCOTE accused of terrorism-related crimes. Amnesty International has not got sufficient information to determine whether or not the accusations against him are false. However, the organization is concerned about allegations made to his lawyer that he was tortured by members of the DINCOTE in order to extract a statement from him accusing Jose Sánchez of being a Shining Path leader.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
In the first half of the 1980s Shining Path and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Party, *Partido Revolucionario Túpac Amaru* (MRTA), another armed opposition group, initiated campaigns of armed attacks. In 1992 the Government of Peru implemented a new set of anti-terrorism laws to combat Shining Path and the MRTA. Since then the authorities have imprisoned at least 5,000 persons accused of terrorism-related crimes, many of whom have been allegedly tortured.

However, according to Peruvian non-governmental human rights organization, at least 1,500 of these were falsely accused of such crimes. Although many of these have been released as a result of a presidential pardon (*indulto presidencial*) or because they were acquitted (*absueltos*) by the courts, hundreds still languish in jail.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:
- expressing concern that José Mercedes Sánchez Torres, detained on 10 February 1999 by members of the DINCOTE, Peru's anti-terrorism police, has been falsely accused of terrorism;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release;
- expressing concern at allegations that Dulio Florián Pachas was tortured by members of the DINCOTE in order to force a statement from him accusing José Sánchez of being a leader of Shining Path;

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-calling on the authorities to conduct a full and independent investigation
into the allegations, to make the findings public, and to bring those responsible
to justice.

APPEALS TO:
<u>Minister of the Interior</u>
José Villanueva Ruesta
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Plaza 30 de Agosto s/n
Urb. Córpac
Lima 27
PERU
FAX:+ 51 1 224 2407
Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado Sr Ministro

COPIES TO:
<u>Human rights organization</u>
APRODEH
Jr. Pachacutec 980
Lima 11
PERU **Salutation: Dear friends/Estimados amigos**

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 6 April 1999.

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on http://www.amnesty.excite.com