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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 50/94

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14 March 1994

**BOLIVIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGES BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES TO INVESTIGATE KILLING OF SPANISH CITIZEN**

Amnesty International has urged the Bolivian authorities to ensure that the investigation into the killing of a 32 year-old Spanish citizen, Manuel Ramón Puchol Pastor, in the northern village of San Matias, is fully and independently conducted; that the findings are made public and that those found responsible are brought to justice before a civilian court.

Amnesty International contacted the Bolivian Minister of Government, German Quiroga Gómez, on 8 March to express concern at reports that the death of Manuel Ramón Puchol Pastor may have been caused by a severe beating he suffered at the hands of members of the army regiment "Monte Florida 14 de Infantería", based in San Matias, Department of Santa Cruz.

Manuel Ramón Puchol Pastor was reportedly arrested by army personnel (militares) on the night of 9 February. An eye-witness apparently saw members of the military (los militares) brutally beat him over the head and body until he lost consciousness. He was subsequently transferred to the local medical centre, Centro de Salud "San Matias", but was dead on arrival. According to the legal medical certificate, the medical examination revealed bruises on his body and severe injuries to his head.

Initial statements by the Bolivian authorities about the death of Manuel Ramón Puchol Pastor, published in the Bolivian and Spanish press, were contradictory. However, Amnesty International understands that a commission of inquiry, headed by the Santa Cruz District Attorney, travelled to San Matias on 2 March to initiate an investigation. Amnesty International has also been informed that a number of military personnel, apparently involved in the incident, have been detained.

Amnesty International has, in recent years, repeatedly expressed its concern to the Bolivian authorities about human rights violations perpetrated by the Bolivian security forces, including attempts on the lives, and torture and beatings, of detainees. In November 1993 Amnesty International submitted a detailed report to the Bolivian President, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, entitled Bolivia: Cases of Torture and Extrajudicial Executions Allegedly Committed by the Bolivian Security Forces.

Amnesty International urges the Bolivian authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure that all allegations of human rights violations by government forces are promptly, thoroughly and impartially investigated. "Failure to identify and bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations could encourage the view that extrajudicial executions, torture and ill treatment are an acceptable method of operation in the future", the human rights organization said. "Ending impunity for human rights abuses is one of the most important preventive measures against further such abuses", according to Amnesty International.

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14 March 1994

**AFGHANISTAN: SIX CIVILIANS KILLED AND OVER 30 INJURED IN BOMBARDMENT OF BREAD QUEUES IN KABUL**

At least six people were reportedly killed and 30 injured on 7 March when rockets hit a crowd waiting for emergency food distribution in war-ravaged Kabul. This was the latest in a succession of attacks by armed forces in Afghanistan which appear directly targeted against civilians.

Since the beginning of February, food convoys organized by international aid agencies have had their access into the capital of Afghanistan blocked by the forces of Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and those of the northern military leader General Dostum, who have allied against the forces of President Rabbani. International aid agencies have repeatedly warned that starvation is imminent for the survivors in Kabul if relief supplies are not permitted to reach them. UN Special Envoy Sotirios Mousouris, in his appeal to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to lift the blockade, said in mid-February: "Soon famine will envelop those remaining innocent citizens of Kabul." The International Committee for the Red Cross estimates that up to 700,000 people in Kabul are too poor to buy any food and are dependent on relief supplies. Doctors in Kabul have warned that malnutrition is spreading among the poor and displaced and that they have been becoming more susceptible to diseases in the winter cold.

On 3 March six trucks carrying 90 tons of food supplies in a UN-organized convoy were held up by the forces of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, despite earlier assurances of safe passage for the convoy. Three of the trucks were confiscated but on 6 March the remaining three were permitted to move on to Kabul following an appeal from the UN Secretary-General. In the Khair Khana district of Kabul, a northern suburb to which thousands of Kabul inhabitants had fled to avoid fierce fighting in the city, people had heard that the aid organization CARE would be distributing wheat flour to the internally displaced people that day. While hungry civilians waited for the food to arrive, cluster bombs, which scatter small bombs over a large area, were fired at them, apparently by forces of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

In the renewed fighting which has continued since 1 January 1994, between 1,200 and 1,400 people have been killed and over 12,000 have been injured. Reports that defenceless civilians, including women and children, are targeted by both sides in the conflict continue to be received. Hospitals, mosques and residential areas have repeatedly been bombarded.

The fighting, originally confined to Kabul and the northern town of Mazar-e-Sharif, has now spread to the provinces Kunduz, Herat, Kandahar, Baghlan, Badghis and Nangarhar. On 15 February, the first day of the latest in a series of cease-fires, some 17 civilians were killed and over 30 were injured. Foreign aid workers and journalists have also been frequent targets of human rights abuses over the last weeks: UNICEF representative Sami Aqeb was abducted on 5 March in northern Kabul by unknown groups and has not been heard of since, and a Canadian journalist and his local translator received gunshot injuries on 5 March when they sought to report on the fighting. New Zealand journalist, Shane Teehan, illegally detained since early January in Kunduz because of his journalistic activities, was released on 2 March when the city was captured by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's forces.

At least 200,000 people have fled Kabul in what the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has called "one of the biggest displacement emergencies in the world". The International Committee for the Red Cross has reported that some 300,000 people have been displaced within Kabul, having sought refuge in other parts of the city when their own homes come under heavy shelling or were destroyed.

**In the eastern town of Jalalabad, over 200,000 internally displaced people have sought safety since 1 January with between 1,600 and 2,000 new refugees arriving every day. Relief agencies cannot supply the displaced with tents, blankets and food fast enough, with the result that thousands have to camp in the open, without any protection against the cold, in areas which have not been cleared of land mines, thousands of which were left behind from the siege of Jalalabad in 1989 and other battles. Many people, including children, are killed or maimed by the mines when they search the area for firewood.**

**Amnesty International is gravely concerned by the continuing human rights abuses perpetrated in Afghanistan in the context of the country's civil war. Amnesty International is urgently calling on all the parties to the conflict to respect human rights, to observe minimum international humanitarian standards and to respect the right to life and the security of the civilian population.**

**Amnesty International is also appealing to the international community to undertake every possible effort and to exert whatever influence its members may have to bring to an end the present widespread human right abuses in Afghanistan.**

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