

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Argentina: One step closer to justice for victims of human rights abuses**

Amnesty International welcomes recent developments in Argentina related to human rights violations committed during the military governments of 1976 to 1983.

The Argentine Chamber of Deputies yesterday declared the Full Stop and Due Obedience Laws null and void. These laws, also known as the amnesty laws, have for many years been an obstacle to truth and justice for victims of human rights. They are incompatible with Argentina's international obligations to investigate, bring to trial and punish the authors of crimes against humanity committed during the period of military rule.

"Argentina is one step closer to ending the malign effect of the amnesty laws and giving victims and their families their rightful opportunity to attain truth and justice," the organization said.

Amnesty International hopes that the Chamber of Deputies decision will shortly be approved by the Senate so that it can enter into Argentine law.

Amnesty International has welcomed recent decisions by Argentine judges ruling the amnesty laws null, void and unconstitutional. These rulings have opened the way for justice to be done in Argentina. The rulings, however, are awaiting a final decision from the Argentine Supreme Court.

Amnesty International also welcomes the decision by President Néstor Kirchner of Argentina to adhere to the United Nations Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutes of Limitation to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity, and the news that a draft bill will be sent to Congress calling for the Convention be given constitutional status.

"These moves show a new willingness on the part of the Argentine executive to make real advances in the struggle against impunity," Amnesty International said. The organization expects the necessary steps to be taken in order for the Convention to become part of Argentine legislation.

### **Background**

The Full Stop and Due Obedience laws, approved by the Argentine Congress in 1986 and 1987 respectively, effectively obstruct the investigation and prosecution of crimes against humanity committed during the military governments of 1976 to 1983.

The laws were repealed by the Argentine Congress in 1998, but their repeal was interpreted by

some members of the judiciary as not being effective retroactively. Both chambers of Congress, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, must declare the amnesty laws null and void before it can enter into Argentine legislation. The status of the laws as unconstitutional, however, requires the final confirmation of the Argentine Supreme Court.

The UN Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutes of Limitation to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity was approved by Congress in 1995, but the Convention only enters Argentine legislation following a presidential signature.

#### Public Document

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