

PERU: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNS SECOND IMPUNITY LAW

This week's approval by the Peruvian Congress of a new law preventing the judiciary from deciding on the legality or applicability of the recently promulgated amnesty law, is condemned by Amnesty International as a dismaying step backwards and a further damaging blow to the independence of the judiciary in Peru.

Peru's amnesty law, which came into effect on 16 June 1995, is in fact an impunity law that closes all investigations and judicial proceedings linked to past human rights violations and renders ineffective the few court sentences handed down for such crimes.

In a move that received strong support from the Peruvian judiciary, and national and international human rights organizations, examining judge Antonia E. Saquicuray ruled that this amnesty law was inapplicable to the judicial investigations into five members of the Peruvian army implicated in the 1991 Barrios Altos massacre. In that massacre, 15 people were murdered and four others seriously injured.

Before a higher court had a chance to discuss the judge's ruling, the Peruvian Congress approved a law which prevents the judiciary from questioning the amnesty law.

Amnesty International deploras this further initiative on the part of the Peruvian Congress. "Amnesty laws are unacceptable when they prevent the emergence of the truth and subsequent accountability before the law," Amnesty International said.

The human rights organization reiterates its call for both impunity laws to be revoked.
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