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FUJIMORI THREATENS DR GUZMAN WITH DEATH PENALTY

A report from UPI News Service stated on October 15:

"President Alberto Fujimori opened the way for the reintroduction of the death penalty by saying Peru would withdraw from the San Jose pact [an international human rights pact], a move which would allow it to reintroduce capital punishment for terrorist offenses. 'Peru is going to denounce the San Jose pact signed during the second government of Fernando Belaunde (1980-1985) because as a signatory to the pact we could not apply the death penalty,' President Alberto Fujimori said. The president said Congress would probably ratify the decision 'because I think everyone here in Peru is in agreement.' "

Fujimori said Dr Guzman could still receive the death penalty if the guerrillas continue to battle the government. Fujimori is quoted by UPI: "The political responsibility for the crimes and attacks that occur will fall on the bosses, even though they are in prison."

This means that Dr Guzman and other leaders of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), and political prisoners from other groups, could be executed for any actions taken in the civil war. And in reality, this also includes any action even attributed to the PCP or other groups by the Peruvian military.

This move by the Peruvian government is a new, very grave threat to the life of Abimael Guzman and hundreds of other political prisoners in Peru. Human rights workers at the Organization of American States and other organizations have called it a very serious, alarming and dangerous new development. It occurs a day after the decision on the "appeal" of Dr Guzman's case was announced, affirming the original guilty verdict and life imprisonment sentence (as predicted/dictated by Fujimori).

Holding a prisoner legally responsible for the actions of those outside (and threatening them with the death penalty) is unprecedented in modern history. Of course, this is often done extra-legally-- repressive regimes killing political prisoners in retaliation for uprisings which occur outside the prison. But what's incredible here is that Fujimori and the Peruvian authorities are actually trying to legally justify such savagery.

Interestingly, a day before Fujimori announced his plans to reinstate the death penalty, an article appeared in the Washington Times, an extremely rightwing US newspaper owned by the Rev. Sun Young Moon (of "Moonie" fame) and edited by a former CIA operative, Arnaud de Borchgrave. The opinion piece was written by William Buckley, a well-known conservative commentator whose opinions often express the views of high officials in the

US government. The article entitled "Unwisely Fated Not to Die" stated: "...Mr Guzman's capture a month ago should have led to the same fate suffered by Che Guevara. When he was caught in 1967 in Bolivia, the president of Bolivia knew the greatest threat to the Bolivian people would be in keeping Che Guevara alive... So the word was slipped to the general on the field: Execute Guevara. Guzman wasn't executed... That failure of nerve (he should have been shot) is a sentence of death, for who know how many Peruvians will be kidnapped and held for ransom for the liberation of Guzman..."

"It is anomolous...to suggest an international request for the execution of a prisoner, but... herewith [is] a call for the execution of Abimael Guzman."

International protest of the new attack by the Peruvian government is urgently needed from ALL those who oppose political repression. We encourage all kinds of protest:

Faxing the Peruvian President Fujimori (5114-310443) We've heard that a US newspaper reported that Fujimori's fax line has been so tied up with protest faxes that he's had trouble conducting his regular business. (Send IEC a copy of your fax--important.)

Sending delegations to local Peruvian embassies

Getting articles and letters in the press and on TV/radio

Getting more prominent people to go as delegates to Peru (a second delegation leaves soon, and more delegations are needed), write letters of protest, and sign the CALL of the IEC.

It's particularly important to go back to people who may have thought the danger of the death penalty had passed. We would also recommend that people again contact the International Offices of Amnesty International concerning this whole situation in London (Ph:44-71-413-5500/Fax:44-71-956-1157) According to their own charter, AI is opposed to the death penalty, it is opposed to the torture of prisoners, it is opposed to secret military tribunals and many of the other violations of international treaties (and Peruvian law) which the Peruvian government has committed. Now this government is denouncing and pulling out of these same international agreements! What will AI do about this-- and when?

THE "SLOW KILLING" OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN PERU

In a related matter, the Association of Democratic Lawyers in Peru is extremely concerned with the conditions of Dr Guzman and the other political prisoners now in custody. They have told the first delegation that conditions for prisoners are quite extreme. One delegate reports: "A lot of prisoners are being taken to Puno now, which is in the mountains. Very cold, very harsh, severe conditions and very little food, medical care. Nothing you know. And people are dying, people are real sick with TB, suffering malnutrition. They're being killed slowly, essentially. They [the Association] said, without focusing media attention and international human rights attention on these prisoners, it's a like a death sentence. Slow death."

DR GUZMAN HELD IN LIFETIME SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Fujimori has personally stated that Dr Guzman will be held in solitary confinement as long as he is alive, with one visit a

month from approved members of immediate family. These conditions amount to a form of torture, according to the principles of most human rights organizations around the world.

NEW SIGNATORIES ON THE CALL:

Some of the recent signatories on the Call for the International Emergency Committee include:

Michael Mansfield, Q.C.- Barrister and Defender of the Cardiff 3,
Presenter of television documentaries (Britain)
Chrissie Hynde- musician, The Pretenders (Britain)
Society of Black Lawyers- Brixton (Britain)
10 Parliamentarians - HEP Party (Turkey)
Prison Legal News - monthly newsletter from Monroe, Washington
Prison (USA)
Paolo Rossi- artist (Italy)
Grimaldi- actor (Italy)
Pignataro- painter (Italy)
3 historians (Cortesi, Dubla, Poole) (Italy)
8 journalists (Naria, Tussi, Romanetti, Calamida, Annarattoni,
Trentin, Pisoni, Riolo) (Italy)
John Rutherford, Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees Union
Secretary, Victorian Branch, (Australia)
Tom Ryan- Secretary of Food Preservers Employees Union
(Australia)
Margorie Broadbent- Federated Teachers Union of Victoria
(Australia)
Dr Drew Cottle- Lecturer in History, Univ of Western Sydney
(Australia)

MORE INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

GERMANY: On Saturday morning, October 16, more than 700 people, mainly Turkish workers, marched through the streets of Bonn, protesting the treatment of Dr Guzman. The demonstration, which also included Germans, Iranians, and other immigrants, condemned the Fujimori regime and voiced strong opposition to the military tribunal and its verdict.

INDIA: There has been much activity in support of Dr Guzman in Cochin, Kerala: A rally and public meeting, posters, and a warning statement to Fujimori has been circulated and signed by thousands of people. It reads in part:

"...The Peruvian authorities are being warned against any danger to the health and life of Abimael Guzman (Gonzalo) on which all the progressive forces of the world are very eager."

ITALY: Two Italian parliamentarians made a public declaration protesting the actions of the Peruvian government. One of them, Lucio Manisco, is also a TV journalist with Italian RAI (Italian network), and works as a correspondent from New York.

AUSTRALIA: A "lightening protest" was held in Canberra by a dozen people at the Peruvian Embassy. This included a lively confrontation with embassy officials. Friends in Australia also report that the "one-day's wages" campaign has taken off, with many people pledging right away.

HOLLAND: 40 people demonstrated in front of the Peruvian Embassy in the Hague Oct. 7.

ENGLAND: Two meetings and two demonstrations have been held in defense of the life of Abimael Guzman over the past two weeks. On the occasion of both meetings, permission to use the public halls was cancelled at the last minute by local officials citing threats by anonymous callers and warnings by certain government officials. This is a highly unusual development in Britain. The meetings were held anyhow, one of them in the street.

We received a copy of a letter which a Belgian lawyer wrote to Dr Guzman which read in part: "I'm sure you know very well that many Europeans are scandalized by the nature of the secret proceeding against you, a proceeding which is quite obviously a parody of justice..."

A letter from a professor in Germany written to Fujimori states in part: "...This behaviour of the Peruvian government is even worse than that of the German Nazis in 1933, who had to acquit the prominent communist Dimitroff in a spectacular trial..."

We were interested to read a report by returning delegate Heriberto Ocasio (from USA) concerning developments in Peru and the mood of people in Lima. An excerpt of his report:

"The evening news, two days before I left, carried an official warning to the national press from the Joint Military Command 'advising' them not to report 'rumours of Sendero actions' in Ayacucho (in the countryside) because spreading these rumours was 'irresponsible' and a 'danger to the public order.'"

"...When we walked around the center of the city, in the first days after our press conference, people would give us the thumbs up and express their gratitude for our taking a stand for justice. A journalist from Ayacucho traveled all the way from this town in the Andes to Lima to find us and tell us how we were speaking for the many who cannot openly speak out in Peru. After a couple of days the government had unleashed a fury of rumours which the press loyally served to spread. They claimed we were there to plot an escape attempt, some tabloids called me a psychiatrist sent by Saddam Hussein, [and that I was the one] who had masterminded the supposed escape attempt. All the papers tried to paint us as organized and paid by the Communist Party of Peru. The press all repeated the government's threats of imprisonment or expulsion. After this, we still heard from people in the streets who supported us and from others who said they sympathized with the revolution, but they spoke to us only in whispers, telling us to 'be careful' of what opinions we expressed, for some opinions are 'illegal' to express in Peru."

THE WORLD IS WATCHING - DEFEND THE LIFE OF ABIMAEEL GUZMAN!