

Emergency Bulletins from the International Emergency Committee to Defend the Life of Dr. Abimael Guzmán

IEC Emergency Bulletins offer the most current information on the developments of the campaign and activities from around the world. These are published by the international office in London. In the US, Canada, and Mexico, contact the IEC-US to receive them by postal mail -- a subscription is \$1.50 per bulletin to cover the cost of postage and reproduction.

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STATEMENT ON THE 5th ANNIVERSARY OF DR GUZMAN'S CAGE SPEECH

This September, five years after his arrest, Dr. Abimael Guzmán (also known as Chairman Gonzalo of the Communist Party of Peru) is still in isolation. Dr. Guzmán was sentenced by a "faceless" military court to life imprisonment, to begin with one-year solitary confinement which was itself a violation of international treaties. Peru's Prosecuting Attorney stated he would begin receiving visitors on 12 September 1993. But instead, every request made by his lawyers to visit him has been turned down. His conditions of imprisonment, according to statements by various Peruvian officials, including President Fujimori himself, are tantamount to blatant torture designed to inflict slow death.

On 24 September 1992, shortly after his capture, the regime attempted to humiliate Dr. Guzmán by presenting him to the international press in a cage. Instead Dr. Guzmán delivered a powerful speech calling for the continuation of the People's War and characterizing his arrest as "merely a bend in the road" on the long march to victory.

Despite the difficulties and temporary setbacks characteristic of any genuine revolutionary movement aiming to overthrow the yoke of imperialism and reaction, events in Peru since his capture and the cage speech, are testimony to the correctness of his basic stand.

The continuing isolation inflicted on Dr. Guzmán today is revenge for his role in leading the People's War for 12 years and taking a courageous and defiant stand in his famous speech from the cage. His treatment has also set an ugly precedent for the military trials and vicious repression handed out to the hundreds of other political prisoners who languish in Peru's dungeons.

The People's War continues under the leadership of the Communist Party of Peru and has won the support and admiration of progressive and revolutionary-minded people around the world.

The IEC on this occasion pledges to continue its work to popularize the revolutionary movement of the downtrodden in Peru, bring to light the plight of the political prisoners there, and in particular to break the isolation of Dr. Guzmán.

September 1997

PRISON CONDITIONS

For a number of years now the UN, AI, and other human right organisations have condemned the Peruvian regime for violating international standards regarding the treatment of political prisoners. The IEC Bulletins and other material have contained reports and information on the plight of the political prisoners and the criminal policies of the regime towards them. It has been of utmost importance and still continues to be so that the crimes of the regime are exposed and people around the world continue to demand that the rights of the prisoners be respected.

What follows is a brief description of the Yanamayo prison as the second in a series of articles on Peruvian prisons and political prisoners.

Yanamayo Prison

The Yanamayo prison sits 4000 meters high in a barren plateau near the Bolivian border. For those who don't know what this means for the prisoners at Yanamayo, it is revealing to know that the best of football teams have lost to Bolivians, arguably a less than average footballing nation, when visiting the capital La Paz.

This 10000 square meter high-security prison was built in 1990 exclusively for political prisoners. Although conditions are generally harsh in Peruvian prisons, political prisoners have been targeted for especially cruel treatment and Yanamayo is but one more testimony to this fact. It is guarded, on the outside, by elite army troops equipped with helicopters, armoured vehicles, etc., who patrol the perimeter and a wide strip of minefield surrounding the complex. Specially trained national Police are responsible for the security inside.

Ruiz Conejo, who spent 15 months in Yanamayo for his friendship with a man who, unbeknown to him, was a PCP activist, says the "ice-cold thin air is terrible. The installation has no heating and most windows have no glass pane; just the bars." The highest temperatures in the summer are around 10 degrees Centigrade, but most of the year it's 10 degrees below freezing.

Prisoners spend 23½ hours a day in 2 metres by 3 metres cells with no electric lighting, housing two or more prisoners. The toilet is a hole in the ground and there is a concrete bed with no mattress and each prisoner is issued two blankets.

Among his worst memories, Ruiz Conejo related to reporters, was hand-washing his clothes in freezing water: "The cold would make my fingers turn purple and split." Prisoners can get extra blankets and clothing from visiting relatives but colours are restricted. No red or yellow is allowed for fear of prisoners making red flags with the Hammer and Sickle. Green and black is also banned because the women prisoners wore them as uniforms on their famous revolutionary military parades inside prisons.

Visiting is restricted to 15 minutes each month. There is no automatic right of visitation for relatives. They have to apply for and obtain clearance passes through the appropriate authorities. Relatives often have to travel for hundreds of miles from Lima or further north on long, treacherous and expensive journeys. This, for most prisoners, means only one or two visits a year with their relatives. No physical contact is allowed during visits and conversation is conducted through two layers of bars with guards in the middle. Visits from children are limited to four a year.

Prison food is anything but adequate. The prison spends 60 centavos (approximately 30 pence) per prisoner per day. This in a country almost as expensive as the U.S. or Europe, means meager meals of potatoes, beans and soup that don't provide minimum standards of nutritional values. Prisoners lose weight drastically, some up to 30 kilos, and become prone to disease.

Inmates are not allowed to have radios, newspapers or magazines. Vetted novels and the Bible are the only reading material allowed but prisoners cannot keep books in the cells. There is no library at Yanamayo. Mail to prisoners is thoroughly checked. The guards collect the mail after reading to prevent prisoners receiving coded messages in series of letters.

The parents of Lori Berenson, the North American jailed for life in Yanamayo for "terrorism," who visited her in January said, "you have to wonder how long can someone survive in these jails." "But she's luckier than those in Lima," said Mark Berenson, referring to prisons where tuberculosis is rife.

But President Fujimori told reporters in January 97 Peru's jails have adequate standards: "The prison conditions are provided in accordance with international standards and these are obeyed with as much rigor as anywhere else in the world." Fujimori personally intervened to stop Red Cross visits to prisons in December 1996. He refused a recent ICRC request to resume their visits.

Francisco Soberon, head of the local human rights group, APRODEH, said Fujimori was right to have introduced stricter treatment for rebels. "But now the torture has to be abolished . . ." [Reuters, 19/01/97]

NO RED CROSS VISITS SINCE DECEMBER 1996

Alberto Fujimori has turned down a Red Cross request for access to political prisoners in Peru, with a mere promise to review the situation in the future. Red Cross President Cornelio Sommaruga said Fujimori told him a definitive response would come as soon as the government finishes a security evaluation of prisons. But for now, no visits for the Red Cross, which inspects living conditions for inmates.

"According to President Fujimori, the moment to resume our independent, neutral, impartial humanitarian mission has not yet come," Sommaruga said on 19 August 97, after meeting with Fujimori. Sommaruga said he was "disheartened" by the decision. "Eight months after the suspension, I thought that the moment had come for these visits to be resumed," he said. Sommaruga said the Red Cross was visiting 4,000 rebel prisoners, either convicted or awaiting trial, before the visits were stopped.

Citing what he termed as security reasons, Fujimori suspended the Red Cross inspections of the living conditions of political prisoners on Dec. 17, 1996.

On August 21 The semi-official government mouthpiece, *Expresso*, attacked the Red Cross as pro-Shining Path. "The International Red Cross sends an official, who is pro-Shining Path guerrilla group, to take charge of operations in Peru. The new head's record includes trying to take a guerrilla leader out of the country and looking for injured rebels in hospital to help them," were some of the accusations against the Red Cross.

MILITARY DEATH SQUADS STILL ACTIVE IN PERU

Leonor La Rosa, an agent working for the Intelligence Service, had never thought one day she would be the victim of the system she had loyally served. For 12 long years she had infiltrated student marches, union meetings, trailed suspected guerrillas, etc. and knew exactly what happened to those she pointed her finger at. But one day she arrived at work and was led down to the basement of the army headquarters where her superiors tortured her severely because they suspected her of leaking the military death squad plans. By the time she was taken to an army hospital on Feb. 17, she had burns and scars on her hands and feet, was bleeding from the nose and vagina and had major spinal injury. For more than a month she kept silent until the mutilated corpse of a fellow agent, Mariella Barreto, was found. Barreto was the fiancé of colonel Santiago Martin Rivas, chief of the army death squad nicknamed Colina group and Montesinos' right-hand man. Colonel Martin Rivas was sentenced to prison in 1994 for the massacre of 26 people at La Cantuta University and Barrios Altos. "It was then I understood if I kept quiet, I would be the next" corpse to be found, says La Rosa. In late April it was revealed that two other agents were killed and many more tortured, among them Mesmer Carlos, who was forced to confess to being a member of the PCP and jailed. Another agent, Jose Bazan, managed to escape to Bolivia but returned after the

revelations by La Rosa, only to be arrested by the military on arrival.

The recent revelations are yet another proof that the military death squads are as alive and active as ever. "They continue their activity, continue in their normal functions. They go in and out [of the army headquarters] as if it's their home," says La Rosa.

Colonel Martin Rivas had been freed, along with other known members of the death squads, in an amnesty by the government in 1995 a few months after he was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Testimony of former agents implicated Martin Rivas in the killing of Barreto and others, who, it seems, knew too much. Ironically, the regime's determination to cover their tracks and make their system leak-proof has led to further exposures of the true face of democracy in Peru.

FUJIMORI'S VISIT SPARKS WAVE OF PROTEST IN BANGLADESH AND INDIA

Bangladesh: Hundreds of IEC supporters held a rally in the Bangladesh capital Dhaka on Friday 23 May against a weekend visit by Alberto Fujimori. "We denounce the visit of Peru's hated President Fujimori who has dealt inhumanely with anti-fascist revolutionaries, including communist leader Abimael Guzmán," said a protest organiser. "This is an act that deserves to be protested....," he told reporters referring to Fujimori's record of dealing with the revolutionary movement there.

Protesters burned a life-size effigy of Fujimori in front of the national press club and scorned the Bangladesh government for inviting him. They staged several black flag protests in Dhaka, Khulna in the south and elsewhere on Saturday and several U.S. flags were burnt amid shouts of "U.S. Imperialist puppet go home." Demonstrators in Dhaka who numbered in the region of 500 clashed with the Police who prevented them from proceeding to the Sheraton Hotel where Fujimori and his entourage were staying.

IEC-Bangladesh learnt of the visit a week in advance and distributed 10000 copies of a leaflet calling on all progressive forces to join in organising protests. The "Liaison Committee of Revolutionary Forces," an umbrella group of different organisations, was also active in organising the demonstrations in Dhaka and elsewhere.

The protests were widely reported in the media and Fujimori was grilled by reporters on the plight of political prisoners, especially Dr. Guzmán. The Bangladesh Observer, a mainstream daily for example, reported sarcastically that "replying to queries about the Shining Path leader Dr. Guzmán, Fujimori termed him as a leader of a terrorist group who is in prison and enjoying all rights as per international laws."

India: Fujimori arrived in Delhi on Sunday, 25th May amidst pomp and fanfare. He signed several bilateral agreements and shared with Indian leaders views on "common security issues linked to insurgency." In a sermon well received by his Indian counterparts he gloated "the world needs to keep peace in order to achieve development," referring to their common necessity to contain armed revolutions and shift the blame on the poor for their system's failure. He did not say why the only "development" in Peru prior to the initiation of People's War was that of sprawling poverty, oppression and misery for the majority.

His arrival, however, for the democratic and revolutionary sections of India was a grim reminder of the continued imprisonment and harsh treatment of Dr. Guzmán and other political prisoners, and brutal repression of the people's movement. Five organisations issued a joint call for protest actions and distributed thousands of information packets detailing crimes of the Fujimori regime and its imperialist backers. Protestors included People's War Group sympathizers and Nepalese workers supportive of the People's War in Nepal. "To fight for Dr. Guzmán's release is to fight against the outmoded, exploitative system in Peru" they declared amid slogans in support of the People's War in Peru.

Fujimori is the first South American head of state to visit the region. He went there to establish

formal ties with the reactionaries in the region. But, to his astonishment he found out first-hand that the people of Peru and this region have had a long-established revolutionary bond that has manifested itself time and again in different forms and actions.

Iran: The winter 97 issue of a liberal-legal magazine published in Iran had a two-page article on Peru. The article, a letter published in the Points of View section, was written on the occasion of the MRTA embassy take-over. The main thrust of the article and the bulk of it, however, is dedicated to the Communist Party of Peru and its Chairman Gonzalo. This article details information about Chairman Gonzalo and the particulars of his arrest and prison treatment. It also claims "some young officers" who were supportive of the movement played an important part in preventing him being killed. It declares: "They let the whole world know and react to his arrest before the regime could move to kill him." The article recalls Dr. Guzmán's response to his arrest as "I am certain the revolution will be victorious," and ends with a poem from Pablo Neruda called A Spark in the Andes.

Spain: A major Trade Union debated the situation of political prisoners in Peru at their annual Conference in May 97, IEC supporters in Cantabria report. The Conference passed a resolution condemning the massacre of the MRTA members at the Japanese embassy in Lima and citing the case of Dr. Guzmán as an example of the cruelty with which political prisoners are treated. The conference resolution demands a stop to Dr. Guzmán's isolation.

U.S.: CSRP Launches National Campaign The Committee to Support the Revolution in Peru (CSRP) who has worked to build political support for the People's War in Peru since 1984 launched a major national campaign this summer 97 to expose and oppose the US-backed Fujimori regime. CSRP produced several Fact Sheets, Bulletins, News Bullets, and a poster that were widely distributed. The CSRP joined with hundreds to express outrage at Fujimori's April massacre of MRTA members in the Japanese embassy. Demonstrations were held near Peruvian consulates in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Washington DC. The CSRP had earlier held demonstrations in San Francisco and New York City during the four-month standoff to oppose this kind of military assault.

In San Francisco the CSRP participated in the Fifth of May annual parade for the sixth consecutive year with guerrilla theater and a float. CSRP members dressed as guerrilla fighters kicked Uncle Sam's butt the entire parade route while Uncle Sam manipulated a Fujimori puppet. Three thousand leaflets condemning Fujimori's massacre of the MRTA members were distributed during the parade.

On May 17, the CSRP participated in a forum organized by the Los Angeles Committee for Human Rights and Freedom for Political Prisoners in Peru. San Francisco chapter held a dinner to celebrate the 17th anniversary of the People's War. CSRP National Spokesperson Heriberto Ocasio went to San Diego to present a paper entitled "Peruvian System of Injustice since Fujimori's 1992 Self-Coup" at an academic conference on Latin America. Ocasio was also a featured guest on the largest Native American radio station in the US located in South Dakota. In Santa Cruz, California Ocasio read passages written by the well-known political prisoner on death row Mumia Abu Jamal about Peru at a programme organized in support of Mumia. The CSRP routinely carries out work on street corners setting information tables, meeting new supporters, etc. Many young people joined CSRP this summer as active members when a popular musical group publicized the CSRP's contact information on the liner notes of their new CD.

The CSRP has a comprehensive web site on the Internet that contains all its publications mentioned above, and much more, including the IEC web pages.

NEWS OF THE PEOPLE'S WAR

Following are reports on some of the actions of PCP guerrillas that were covered in the press.

May 12 - An explosion was heard early on Monday near high-tension electricity towers in the poor

Lima suburb of San Juan de Lurigancho, local radio station Radio Programas del Peru reported. Peru's Maoist guerrillas have, in recent months, targeted the installations of electricity utility Edelnor with a string of dynamite attacks.

May 15 - Maoist guerrillas fought police in the poor Lima suburb of Ate-Vitarte early on Thursday and then set off a car bomb that injured at least eight officers. The pre-dawn bombing ripped the facade from the police station and a municipal office in Lima's suburb of Ate-Vitarte.

The guerrillas, who had earlier promised to turn this month into "Red May," detonated 88 pounds (40 kgs) of dynamite from a van that pulled up near the police station at about 3:20 a.m. local time, police sources said. Minutes before, they attacked the police station from the rear, engaging policemen in a firefight and letting off small detonations, witnesses said.

Propaganda was found nearby reading: "Long live the 17th anniversary of the People's War-Down with the genocidal armed forces and the police," and "Long live the street-vendors' struggle!" The pamphlets, signed with the Shining Path's proper name, The Communist Party of Peru (PCP), referred to the Party's May 17, 1980 launching of its insurgency, and recent violent clashes between police and thousands of street vendors being evicted from their positions in downtown Lima.

Peru's anti-terrorism police say that in recent years the Maoist rebels have been working in the sprawling shanty towns that ring Lima to rebuild their grass roots networks and find young recruits not known by intelligence services.

May 19 - Maoist Shining Path guerrillas draped a red hammer-and-sickle flag over a footbridge in downtown Lima Monday and laid some small explosives nearby. The police spokesman said the action was part of a campaign to mark the anniversary of the day Shining Path took up arms against the Peruvian state on May 17, 1980.

May 21 - Maoist guerrillas shot one policeman to death and injured another on Tuesday night while the pair patrolled a Lima suburb, police said. The rebels forced the policemen to stop their motorcycles by abruptly driving across their path. Two guerrillas leapt out of the car and shot at them from close range before making off with the officers' pistols, police officials said.

The shooting, at about 10.00-p.m. local time Wednesday, coincided with the explosion of three molotov cocktail bombs inside an empty cinema in Lima's San Borja district.

May 28 - More than a score of heavily armed Peruvian guerrillas swarmed through an isolated village in the northern Andes and attacked public buildings with explosives, police said on Wednesday. The rebels caused damage to the village hall, the local governors' house and a small clinic but did not injure anybody at Buldibuyo in the region of La Libertad, regional police told Reuters by telephone.

The attack occurred in the early hours on Tuesday, three days travel by jeep from the region's police headquarters at Trujillo, 360 miles (570 km) north of Lima.

National radio station CPN reported that Maoist Shining Path members carried out the attack to replenish their food supply from the village before heading off to their bases. Peru's security forces had been sweeping through neighboring departments along the Huallaga valley in a massive encirclement and suppression campaign to capture the leadership of the People's War.

June 13 - Peruvian authorities said a soldier died in a clash with the Maoist rebels in a remote part of south-central Peru. The report said that a column of 35 guerrillas attacked an army patrol Wednesday using gunshots and explosives. The half-hour battle took place in Ccano (cq), in La Mar province, 330 kilometers (205 miles) southeast of Lima. The clash took place in a part of Peru where the military says comrade Feliciano and other PCP leaders are believed to be located. [UPI]

July 6 - Large PCP guerrilla groups simultaneously took over three towns in central and northern regions of Peru. A group of about 50 guerrillas, mainly young women, entered the Ramal de Aspuzana town near Tingo Maria, while another 100 strong column entered the town of Tricos in

Huanta province, Ayacucho. A smaller group, about 20, raided a meeting of paramilitary ronderos in Mejorada, Huanta province, where some of the rondas put up resistance. The chairman of the rondas in Mejorada and two army collaborators in Ramal were killed.

July 31- Two soldiers died in a battle on Tuesday near the PCP stronghold of Pampahuasi in the remote jungle highlands, 140 miles south-east of Lima. The clash occurred a week after the guerrillas killed a paramilitary rondero member in the nearby village of Machente.

August 17- Heavily armed PCP guerrillas raided an oil exploration camp belonging to a local company working for the French oil giant Elf in the River Ene zone of Peru's central jungle. Guerrillas stayed in the camp for nearly four hours talking to the workers about the aims of the PCP and left with communications equipment, food and medicine.

Wire services and the press throughout the world reported the event as "kidnapping of 29 oil workers by the Shining Path."

September 25- Maoist rebels exploded dynamite late on Wednesday outside two local government offices in poor districts on the outskirts of Lima. The explosion was the second in the Capital this month. PCP guerrillas were campaigning for support in the shantytowns late on Wednesday, an army officer told Reuters.

Sept. 30- Security forces took over a jungle town on Tuesday during a sweep for suspected PCP guerrillas and their supporters, local television reported. Around 200 soldiers and 100 policemen took part in the operation in Tingo Maria in the Upper Huallaga Valley. One hundred people were arrested during the sweep, but security forces in Tingo Maria and Lima refused to give any further details. "This sort of thing is too delicate to talk about," a police spokesman told Reuters. Peru's security forces are infamous for leaving behind a trail of murder, mass graves, and mayhem inflicted on the population wherever they go. Four days earlier, the skeletal remains of at least 30 men who apparently died violently were found in a cave in a region of northern Peru where there were similar operations by the army in the 1980s. The skeletons, fractured limbs and skulls, were found by journalists Wednesday in the province of Ancash after an anonymous tip. "We have photographed 30 skulls, and as we continue digging we keep finding more," said Pedro Maguino, publisher of the newspaper Ya in the nearby city of Huaraz.

In Memory of Karim Essack

The IEC coordinating committee was saddened to learn that Karim Essack died this summer. He was a Tanzanian anti-imperialist who, for several decades, actively supported national liberation movements across the world. Karim Essack was a friend of the Peruvian people and a supporter of the People's War in Peru who dedicated some of his writings to Dr Guzmán and other PCP fighters. He was a signatory to the IEC Call and helped propagate the campaign in Africa. He will be missed.