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PUBLIC STATEMENT
Uruguay

**Amnesty International calls for truth and justice
for victims of crimes against humanity**

Amnesty International has reiterated its call to the Uruguayan authorities to ensure that human rights violations committed during past military governments are thoroughly investigated. The organization reminds the authorities that, only truth and justice will help the victims and their relatives to heal the suffering endured for more than two decades.

Today the relatives of scores of people who "disappeared" in Uruguay between 1973 and 1985 will be asking yet again for the fate of their loved ones. How long will they have to wait for an answer?

In July 1998 the Uruguayan government took part in the establishment of the International Criminal Court in Rome. The Court's statute defines the widespread and systematic use of torture and enforced disappearance as crimes against humanity.

The Uruguayan government must be coherent with its commitment to the Court. It is imperative that the crimes against humanity committed during past military governments in Uruguay are clarified. The victims and their relatives have the right to know the truth and receive justice, essential requirements for upholding the rule of law.

Background

Under Uruguay's Expiry Law, all police and military personnel responsible for human rights violations committed before 1 March 1985 were granted impunity. In April 1989 a national referendum resulted in the retention of this law. The Expiry Law allowed for administrative investigations into the scores "disappearances" which occurred during military rule. However, the investigations were entrusted to military prosecutors, leading to serious doubts regarding their impartiality.

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