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REPORTS OF TORTURE AT THE MADRE MIA MILITARY BARRACKS

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Amnesty International is concerned about the reported torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of 33-year-old peasant farmer, Ramón Lozano Panduro, by members of the army from the Madre Mía military base in the Alto Huallaga.

According to his testimony, he was detained with about thirty other men, women and children around 6.00am on 28 August 1990, as they travelled along the main road bordering the jungle in the San Jacinto village of Uchiza district, Tocache province, San Martín department, by members of the security forces.

In his testimony Ramón Lozano stated:

"They stopped all of us who were heading that way. Sure they said something, I saw nothing. First they dragged one, then another, I went to hand myself in. They took the three of us up, to some premises. On my return, already evening, they told me they had detained me because two years ago I was named as a local official. I no longer am." (1)

Later that day, he was reportedly taken with an unnamed person to the nearby Madre Mía military barracks. Although the detention was carried out in the presence of witnesses, when relatives went to the barracks the authorities denied any knowledge of Ramón Lozano's whereabouts. However, eight days later he was reportedly granted a conditional release and left abandoned on a roadway by soldiers who had demanded an unspecified sum of money from his relatives in exchange for his freedom. It is not known what happened to the other people travelling.

During his detention, Ramón Lozano claims to have been subjected to severe torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. During the first days he was apparently deprived of food and held in a two metre deep pit while water was thrown over him.

"They put us in an underground cell, which they called "cans". They were pits, we were totally incommunicado. They wouldn't let us see our families. We knew nothing. I don't know what happened to the man who was with me." (2)

Ramón Lozano claims that he was only allowed out in order to answer questions, while being beaten with sticks and stones, trampled on and strangled. In the early morning he was forced to bath in the open air and then to return to the pit with damp clothes and his hands bound. Ramón Lozano is reportedly suffering long term damage to his head and kidneys, apparently as a consequence of the torture, and lives in fear that he may be rearrested.

"I don't want to go back because the military know me now, at any moment they could capture me again, or suddenly someone might see me and accuse me. I have to leave my family, my mother: it's very hard. There is a lot of abuse, with women it's the same. There is no respect." (3)

Reports indicate that other unidentified persons were also being held at the same military barracks and subjected to torture. It is not known whether these were the same people who were detained on 28 August.

Torture during detention is a common practice in areas under State of Emergency. Many of those detained by the armed forces "disappear" indefinitely, while others may be released after days or weeks in secret custody.

1. "Detuvieron a todos los que subíamos por ahí. Seguramente dijeron algo, yo no vi nada. Primero agarraron a uno, luego a otro, yo me fui a entregar. A los tres nos llevaron hacia arriba, a los locales. A mi regreso, ya en la tarde, me dijeron que me habían detenido porque hace dos años fui nombrado delegado de ese lugar. Ya no lo soy."
2. "Nos depositaron en una cárcel subterránea, ellos le llaman "botes", eran unos pozos, estábamos totalmente incomunicados. No nos dejaban vernos con la familia. No sabíamos nada. No sé qué pasó con el señor que iba conmigo."
3. "No quiero regresar, porque los militares ya me conocen, en cualquier rato me pueden coger de nuevo, o de repente alguien me ve y me acusa. Tengo que dejar a mi familia, a mi madre: es muy duro. Existe mucho abuso, con las mujeres es igual. No hay respeto."