



**amnesty
international**

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT
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**URGENT
ACTION**

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 75/87 (AMR 22/11/87 13 March) -
Hunger-strike/Legal & Health Concern

ORIGINAL

CHILE: Political prisoners on hunger-strike

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Amnesty International has learned that around 300 political prisoners throughout Chile have now joined in the hunger-strike which began on 25 February 1987 (not 22 February as originally reported) to protest against unfair trials and the treatment of political prisoners. The hunger-strike started in connection with two trials involving members of the Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front, an armed opposition group) who were accused of smuggling arms (known as the "arsenales" case) and those accused of attempting to assassinate General Pinochet (the "atentado" case).

The prisoners are calling for: the release of all political prisoners, either through an amnesty or by being allowed to exchange their sentences for exile (this possibility is provided for in Chilean law); an end to the appointment of special military prosecutors (known as fiscales ad hoc) to deal with particular cases; and the transfer of judicial proceedings from military to civilian courts.

Although Amnesty International does not take any position on the hunger-strike itself or on the call for an amnesty for political prisoners, it has been concerned for a number of years about the lack of guarantees for a fair trial for most political prisoners. Their trials are mostly dealt with by military courts whose impartiality has been called into question by independent human rights groups, and numerous judicial irregularities have been reported. Among these concerns are the frequent bringing of charges apparently based solely in confessions extracted under torture by police; denial of access to lawyers of the trial papers during the investigation stage; the extension of the investigation period beyond the maximum 40 days allowed by law, sometimes to several years.

Defence lawyers have submitted numerous complaints against the special military prosecutor in charge of the trials connected with the "arsenales" and "atentado" cases, and on 25 February 1987 the defendants began their hunger-strike after the prosecutor stopped their visits as a punishment for refusing to answer further questions. Earlier, the prosecutor had been criticized for giving confidential trial information to the press, for allegedly issuing threats against the defendants, and for renewing orders of incommunicado detention for extended periods. A submission by the defence lawyers that the special prosecutor was not a lawful tribunal was rejected by the higher courts.

Latest news indicates that the prisoners who initiated their hunger-strike on 25 February and 2 March are now in a weak physical condition, and that one, Vasily Carrillo, is in a serious condition in a prison hospital. He is said to be suffering from renal deficiency and dehydration and to be still refusing to take any food. He has asked to be taken back to the Cárcel Pública to be with other hunger-strikers there.

Telephone 01-833 1771 Telegrams: Amnesty London WC1 Telex: 28502

Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the release of men and women detained anywhere because of their beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin, language or religious creed, provided they have not used or advocated violence. These are termed *prisoners of conscience*. It works for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial. It opposes the death penalty and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all prisoners.

All those who were in incommunicado detention have now received visits, except Mauricio Arenas Bejas. He is still seriously ill and incommunicado in hospital, where he has been held since his arrest on 19 February 1987 following a reported armed confrontation with police.

Further recommended action: Please continue appeals:

- calling for guarantees of a fair trial for all political prisoners in accordance with international standards;
- urging that the incommunicado detention order against Mauricio Arenas Bejas be immediately lifted;
- seeking assurances that the hunger-strikers will be given access to any medical treatment or supervision should they request it.

Appeals to:

Sr. Hugo Rosende
Ministro de Justicia
Ministerio de Justicia
Agustinas 1401-1419
Santiago, Chile

Sr. Hernan Novoa
Director Nacional
Gendarmeria de Chile
Rosas 1274
Santiago, Chile

Telegrams to: Ministro Justicia,
Santiago, Chile

Telegrams to: Director Nacional,
Gendarmeria, Santiago, Chile

Copies to:

Cor. Fernando Torres Silva
Fiscal Militar
Centeno 102
Santiago, Chile

Agrupación de Familiares
de Presos Politicos
c/o Huerfanos 1805
Santiago, Chile

(military prosecutor)

(Association of Relatives of
Political Prisoners)

Sres.
Corte Marcial
Palacio de los Tribunales
Santiago, Chile

Sr. Alcaide
Centro de Detención Preventiva
General Mackenna 1341
Santiago, Chile

(military appeals court)

Sr. Alcaide
Centro de Readaptación Social
Pedro Montt 1920
Santiago, Chile

and to diplomatic representatives of Chile in your country.

Please check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 April 1987.

— Please take action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the recommended action. If possible, send a telegram or express letter immediately to one or more of the addresses given. Other letters can be sent afterwards.

— Telegrams and letters should be brief and courteous. Stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. Refer to relevant provisions in international law, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 3 — "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

Article 5 — "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

Article 9 — "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile."

— The name of Amnesty International may be used, although letters written in a private or personal capacity may be more effective.

— Copies of appeals should be sent to relevant diplomatic representatives in your country.

— In Urgent Action cases, Amnesty International has to act rapidly to prevent the ill-treatment of prisoners. An appeal is issued when Amnesty International believes it has received reliable and accurate information in such cases. It is not always possible to verify all details independently and in some instances the situation outlined in the appeal may change. Urgent Action participants are always notified of any significant new facts.

— Copies of any replies received from government authorities should be sent immediately to your section's Urgent Action coordinator or direct to the Campaign and Membership Department of the International Secretariat. If appropriate, thank the official who has replied and ask to be kept informed about the case.