

**ARGENTINE COMMISSION**

**FOR**

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

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**COMISION ARGENTINA**

**POR LOS**

**DERECHOS HUMANOS**

**(CADHU)**

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The Argentine Commission for Human Rights is a non-profit, non-governmental international organization working for the defense of human rights in Argentina. The Commission was formed by a group of Argentine lawyers who through the practice of their profession became increasingly aware of the need for a permanent national and international organization to defend human rights in their country. Constituted in response to the dramatic events which followed the military coup of March 24, 1976, the Commission now has permanent representatives in Geneva, Rome, Paris, Mexico City, and Washington, D.C.

## Principles of CADHU

CADHU is dedicated to the promotion and protection of the human rights of the people of Argentina, as defined in the following international declarations:

- **UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS** of the United Nations (1948), which states that the "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." (Preamble)
- **COVENANT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS** of the United Nations (1966), which includes recognition of the rights of all people to just and favorable conditions of work (Article 7) and to an adequate standard of living (Article 11).
- **COVENANT OF CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS** of the United Nations (1966), which includes prohibition of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment (Article 7) and provides that all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity (Article 11).
- **CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA** (1853), which includes guarantees of the rights to join trade unions and to have collective bargaining agreements, and of the right to strike (Article 14); and provides that jails shall be kept healthy and clean and exist for the purpose of security and not the punishment of those detained. The Constitution also guarantees the right to due process of law and specifically outlaws both the death penalty for political reasons and the use of torture (Article 18).

## Argentina Today

Today in Argentina the principles enunciated in these international declarations are flagrantly violated on a daily basis by the military junta led by General Jorge Videla. In the immediate aftermath of the March 24, 1976 coup, every legal and constitutional guarantee was annulled, and the judicial structure placed entirely in the hands of military officers. National and provincial legislatures were dissolved and all political and trade union activity expressly suspended.

Since that time, the military has taken control of all aspects of political and social life in the country. Official communiques, wire service reports, and CADHU sources indicate that government forces have killed at least 2000 people, including priests, lawyers, doctors, professors, scientists, artists, and trade union leaders. The junta's economic policies, according to *Latin America Economic Report* in London, have resulted in a 56% reduction in the purchasing power of wages. While imposing the strictest censorship of the media, the government allows the proliferation of anti-Semitic literature.

Worst of all is the situation in the prisons. Thousands of people have disappeared off the streets into secret interrogation centers. Many are never heard from again, and often their relatives can obtain no information as to their whereabouts. In these centers people are subjected to the grossest forms of torture and often executed. Those who are accounted for in the prisons are subjected to overcrowding, starvation, and the lack of even elementary health care.

Concern for this situation outside Argentina has led to a number of international investigations. Teams from such organizations as Amnesty International and the International Movement of Catholic Jurists have visited the country, and hearings have been held by the International Affairs Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. These investigations have added to the mounting documentation proving that the government of Argentina is engaged in a pattern of massive and consistent violation of human rights.

# **CADHU'S Information Bureau in the UNITED STATES**

Through its bulletin, produced in Argentina, and through the gathering of material from a number of international sources, CADHU assembles and distributes information on the continuing violation of human rights in that country. Documents and testimonies obtained and compiled by CADHU have been received as evidence by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the European Parliament and the French, Italian, and British Parliaments. Two representatives of CADHU testified before the recent hearings on Argentina held in the U.S. Congress by Rep. Donald Fraser.

A new CADHU Information Bureau is now open in Washington, D.C. Funded by contributions from within the United States, the Bureau will make accurate and up-to-date information about the situation in Argentina available to the media, to civic and religious organizations, and to anyone interested in human rights.

We believe that this service will be indispensable to the U.S. public and its representatives in contributing to the restoration of human rights in Argentina. We invite you to contact us for this information.

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