

Network of Concerned Historians				NCH
Campaigns				
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Names
2009		60	Peru	<i>Salomón Lerner Febres</i>

Announcement

Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the Network of Education and Academic Rights (NEAR) report today about death threats against Salomón Lerner Febres, the former president of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Truth commissions such as this one write, as it were, the first rough draft of national history, and therefore the fate of its members should be of grave concern to the historical profession. In addition, Salomón Lerner is currently vice-president of a commission to establish a memorial museum to commemorate the victims of the civil violence in 1980-2000. We hope that you can send the recommended urgent appeals immediately. Please remember to write in your professional capacity.

P.S. 1: For previous news about Salomón Lerner Febres, see NCH *Annual Reports 2002* and *2006* on the NCH website.

P.S. 2: For previous news about the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, see NCH *Annual Reports* from 2001 to 2009 on the NCH website.

P.S. 3: For a NCH campaign (2005) in support of three Peruvian forensic anthropologists, see <http://www.concernedhistorians.org/images/ca/41.pdf>.

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**HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH /
NETWORK OF EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC RIGHTS (1 October 2009)**

PERUVIAN ACADEMIC RECEIVES DEATH THREATS

Prominent academic and human rights defender, Dr. Salomón Lerner Febres, has reported receiving death threats at his office in the Catholic University of Peru, Human Rights Watch has said. The former president of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been subjected to harassment before and the Peruvian authorities are being called upon to investigate the threats immediately.

Dr Lerner, also the former rector of the Catholic University of Peru and current president of the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, reported that on 5 September 2009 his dogs, which were

on his property, were poisoned and killed. On 23 September 2009 anonymous calls were made to his home and his office at the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights warning that “What we did to your dogs, we will do to you.”

According to Human Rights Watch, Dr. Lerner has previously been a victim of harassment and repeated threats by telephone and email. A prominent public figure in Peru, he is currently vice-president of a commission to establish a memorial museum to commemorate the victims of the civil violence in the last two decades of the twentieth century.

The Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos in Peru (an umbrella organisation of most Peruvian human rights NGOs) has condemned the “persistent campaign” against Dr Lerner and has called on the government to take action. The Catholic University of Peru has also issued a statement of solidarity with Dr Lerner.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up in 2001 to examine human rights violations and acts of violence committed by terrorist groups and the military during the 1980s and 1990s in Peru. Since the Commission issued its report in 2003, Lerner has been a victim of several incidents of harassment and has received repeated threats by phone and email. According to Human Rights Watch, the carefully collated information gathered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has led to an increase in the number of prosecutions of former military and police officers for human rights abuses.

Peru is a signatory to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights which states in Article 17 that everyone has the right to the protection of the law against unlawful interference with his privacy, family or correspondence.

ADDITIONAL NEWS FROM HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (5 October 2005):

The Peruvian authorities should provide immediate protection to the president of the country’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Human Rights Watch said today. Salomón Lerner, the president of the commission, has recently received death threats and insulting, anti-Semitic e-mails. Human Rights Watch said that the Peruvian government should also undertake an immediate and thorough investigation to find out who is responsible for the threats. “The Peruvian government must respond firmly to these vicious threats before Lerner or another human rights defender is hurt,” said José Miguel Vivanco, Americas director at Human Rights Watch. “And the people responsible for the threats must be promptly found and brought to justice.”

Lerner told the Peruvian newspaper *Peru21* that a few days ago, when he was out of the country, an anonymous caller called his office at the Catholic University in Lima. The caller told his secretary that Lerner should “consider himself dead.” Over the last few weeks, Lerner, whose father was Jewish, has also received insulting and crudely anti-Semitic e-mails that accuse him of attacking the Peruvian armed forces. Other members of the commission have also received insulting messages. Most have been sent by a writer calling himself “Pachacútec,” which was the name of an Inca emperor.

Peru’s truth commission published its report on human rights violations in the country’s 20-year armed conflict on August 28, 2003. This year, on the second anniversary of publication, the commission came under fierce attack in the press from retired military officers and politicians. Largely due to the commission’s careful collection of evidence, the number of former military and police officers under prosecution for human rights violations has climbed steeply in the past year. At the last count 378 were facing charges, including 273 from the army. Lerner and other commissioners are now facing nine legal suits filed by military officers and one civilian for allegedly misrepresenting the facts and making baseless accusations against them. Human Rights Watch urged the Peruvian government to issue a public declaration of support for the commission and renew its pledge to carry out the commission’s recommendations in full.

In an interview published yesterday in *Peru21*, Lerner commented: “In our report we condemned the subversion. But we also said that there were people in the armed forces who applied a bad understanding of the strategy of combat, and thought that it was legitimate and moral to pay collateral costs to combat terrorism, that innocent people should die. That’s unacceptable.”

ACTION RECOMMENDED BY NEAR:

Please send appeals:

**Calling on the Peruvian authorities to begin immediate and thorough investigations into the alleged threats made to Dr. Salomón Lerner Febres.

**Reminding the authorities that Peru is a signatory to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, which requires (in Article 17) that everyone has the right to the protection of the law against unlawful interference with his privacy, family or correspondence.

Appeals to:

President of Peru

**Presidente Alan García

**2009 Despacho Presidencial

**Jr. de la Unión 300 s/n 1era cuadra

**Lima, Perú

Mayor of Lima

**Luis Castañeda Lossio

**Alcalde de Lima Metropolitana

**Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima

**Jr. de la Unión 300 / Jr. Conde de Superunda 177

**Lima, Perú

Please also send copies of your appeals to:

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