

FREE LORI BERENSON



Lori in Socabaya
prison in 1999

- Lori Berenson has been imprisoned in Perú since November 30, 1995.
- She received a life sentence by a hooded military tribunal in January 1996.
- The verdict was nullified and the sentence overturned on August 28, 2000.
- She was sentenced to 20 years on June 20, 2001, after another unjust proceeding in a special terrorism court.
- In February 2002, the Supreme Court of Perú upheld this sentence and denied Lori's appeal.
- In July 2002, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) concluded that Perú violated Lori's rights to due process and fairness and treated her inhumanely.
- On September 6, 2002, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights agreed to hold hearings in which Perú will have to show cause as to why they did not comply with the IACHR's ruling.

Although Lori has been vindicated she remains in prison. Lori maintains her innocence on all charges, and no witness testimony or evidence has shown otherwise.

Lori's Imprisonment

Lori Berenson was arrested by Peruvian anti-terror police and forcibly taken off a bus in downtown Lima. At the time, she was working as a freelance journalist, preparing articles for two American publications. She was 26 years old. Although Lori has always been committed to non-violence, she was accused of being a leader in a Peruvian revolutionary guerrilla movement called the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA). She had no chance to defend herself against preposterous charges. She was "convicted" of treason and was sentenced to life in a maximum-security military prison by a hooded anonymous Army officer while a hooded soldier held a gun to her head. Lori has been held in a number of different prisons in Peru and spent several years at a high altitude prison under extremely harsh, inhumane and life-threatening conditions. As a result of these conditions, her health has suffered permanently.

Recent Events

On August 28, 2000, Peru's Supreme Council on Military Justice nullified her conviction of "treason against the fatherland." Rather than set her free, Peru immediately remanded her case to the Civilian Terrorism courts where she underwent a second "trial" even though this **constituted "double jeopardy" under Peruvian law.**

On June 20, 2001 the court declared that she was not a member of the MRTA and did not participate in any violent act. Lori was found guilty of assisting the MRTA and was sentenced to 20 years even though there was no witness testimony or documents to support this verdict. Unfortunately, this trial demonstrated what the U.S. Department of State and many human rights groups have stated, that the Special Civilian Courts for Terrorism in Peru do not meet international standards of fairness and due process.

In July of 2002, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) vindicated Lori Berenson. After a detailed study, the IACHR found in favor of Lori, saying that both her military and civilian trials deprived her of due process and fairness and that she has been inhumanely treated. The IACHR also ruled again that the two anti-terrorist laws under which she was convicted are not in accordance with international law. Former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori created these laws, and they are still used by the current Peruvian government. The IACHR clearly stated that Fujimori's laws need to be reformed in order to conform to international law. Although Peru recently changed some laws, it still has not complied with the IACHR's ruling in this case. In response, the IACHR brought the case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

On September 6, 2002, the Inter-American Court agreed to hold hearings in which Peru will have to show cause as to why they did not comply with the IACHR's ruling. Although it is a foregone conclusion that the Court will find in Lori's and the Commission's favor, the process may take 2-4 years.

**Committee to
Free Lori Berenson**
A young woman held political prisoner in Perú.



National Office: 110 Maryland Avenue, NE, #112, Washington, DC 20002

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Phone: (202) 548-8480 Fax: (202) 544-9613

www.freelori.org (English)

www.lorilibre.org (Spanish)

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SUPPORT FOR LORI

Lori has been declared a political prisoner by Amnesty International. The United Nations High Commission on Human Rights has stated that Lori has been arbitrarily detained.

Thanks to the urging of supporters in the U.S., in 2000, the majority of the **House of Representatives and 44 Senators** expressed support for Lori's release.

President George W. Bush urged a humanitarian resolution to Lori's case and Secretary of State Powell expressed his concern to Peruvian President Toledo.



What You Can Do

Please write or call

to inform the following that Lori has been vindicated by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and should be released. Ask that they do everything in their power to secure Lori's freedom.

President George W. Bush

1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
The White House
Washington D.C. 20500
202-456-1111 (press 0 for a hotline operator)

Secretary of State Colin Powell

US Department of State
Washington, DC 20520
202-647-4000 (ask for comment line, press 3)

Congress (find out at www.vote-smart.org)

[Your Representative]
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-3121

[Your Senators]
US Senate
Washington DC 20510
202-224-3121

◆ **Stay up-to-date on Lori's case:**

Visit our web site or contact our National Office listed below.

◆ **Send a donation:**

Mail the response card attached.

◆ **Copy this flyer and give it to others.**

Please inform others of Lori's plight.



Join the Committee to Free Lori Berenson

Name _____

Address _____

Tel. _____

Email _____

[] Please accept the following contribution made payable to **Free Lori Berenson** \$ _____

****tax-deductible contributions of \$50 or more can be made to the PROTEUS FUND:**

INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

Thank you for your support. Please return to the Committee's National Office in Washington, DC.