

Public

---

# amnesty international

---

## URUGUAY: SIMÓN RIQUELO Welcome



April 2002  
AI Index: AMR 52/001/02  
Distr: SC/CC/CO

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, 1 EASTON STREET, LONDON WC1X 0DW, UNITED KINGDOM

---

# **amnesty international**

---

## **URUGUAY: SIMÓN RIQUELO Welcome**

April 2002

SUMMARY

AI INDEX: AMR 52/001/02

DISTR: SC/CC/CO

On 19 March 2002, an Argentinian judge confirmed that the young man now aged 25 who was adopted as a baby by an Argentinian family is Simón Riquelo, the son of Sara Méndez, a Uruguayan refugee living in Argentina who was arrested there by Uruguayan soldiers in the context of the Condor Plan in which several different military governments from South America participated during the 1970s.

Amnesty International wrote to Sara Méndez on 11 April 2002 to express the organization's joy at her reunion with Simón after more than 25 years of struggle to find justice and truth.

Amnesty International has worked on the case for over 20 years. The organization hopes that Simón Riquelo's reunion with his mother Sara Méndez will serve as an example to the Uruguayan authorities and that they will demonstrate that they are truly committed to protecting and promoting human rights by prioritizing the search for each and every one of the Uruguayan citizens who "disappeared" in Uruguay and Argentina when the military were in power, bringing those responsible for such grave human rights violations to justice and compensating the victims or their relatives.

Attached is the full text of the letter Amnesty International sent to Sara Méndez.



Mrs Sara Méndez  
Camino Los Molinos 6001  
esq. Camino Uruguay  
Montevideo  
Uruguay

11 April 2002

Dear Sara Méndez,

I am taking this opportunity to write to you on behalf of Amnesty International to express our immense satisfaction and joy at the outcome of your long search for truth and justice. We were delighted to hear that, after the 26 long years of hope, frustration and disappointment you have spent in searching for your son Simón, the judge has finally confirmed that the results of a DNA test show that the young man living in Argentina is definitely and without doubt your son Simón. We hope that from now on you and Simón will be able to meet and begin to get to know each other and share your lives. Amnesty International and its thousands of members throughout the world are overjoyed at the news of this long-awaited reunion between you and Simón and are joining you in celebrating this happy ending to your tireless struggle.

For years Amnesty International has closely followed and actively supported the long and difficult journey that you and your family, with the support of thousands of people in Uruguay, Argentina and other parts of the world, have undertaken in your search for Simón. For over two decades the organization has been calling of the Uruguayan authorities to reveal the truth about those who "disappeared" in Uruguay during the years of military dictatorship. This is therefore an occasion which gives us not only great joy but also hope and strength to carry on the work we are doing, together with thousands of other human rights activists throughout the world, to secure justice and truth for so many other families in other parts of the world who are still waiting to be reunited with their loved ones after long years of tireless searching.

Mrs Méndez, for us your long search is an example of perseverance and tenacity which has inspired thousands of people throughout the world who are working on a daily basis for a fairer world in which the human rights of all people are respected. We very much hope that your reunion with Simón will lead to the opening of a new chapter for truth and justice in the history of Uruguay in which no other family in the country will have to suffer the absence of a loved one or the anguish and uncertainty of not knowing and in which no other young person will be deprived of their identity, family and history.

We hope that this historic reunion will encourage the Uruguayan authorities to show, once and for all, their true commitment to respecting and promoting human rights and their willingness to resolve

---

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL  
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

Tel: Int. Code: 44 (20) 7413 5500. UK Code: 020 7413 5500. Fax: Int. Code: 44 (20) 7956 1157. UK Code: 020 7956 1157.

E-mail: [amnestyis@amnesty.org](mailto:amnestyis@amnesty.org)

Web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

each and every one of the cases of Uruguayan citizens who "disappeared" in Uruguay and Argentina and whose whereabouts remains unknown, to bring those responsible for such serious human rights violations to justice and to compensate the victims or their relatives.

We wish you and your family, including Simón, every happiness and from London would like to join with thousands of citizens the whole world over in giving a very warm welcome to Simón. Welcome, Simón! And thank you, Sara, thank you for your dignified example of tenacity and perseverance and for your struggle which is the struggle of all of us who believe that it is possible to have a more egalitarian and just world in which nobody's fundamental rights are curbed.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Lee  
Director  
Americas Regional Program