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Human Rights Developments

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Bolivian President Banzer has moved to end a hunger strike by an estimated 1,200 persons in La Paz protesting human rights violations. The demonstrators are seeking the release of political prisoners and permission for exiles to return home. On 17 January, Banzer informed the demonstrators that they would be arrested; he followed up on his threat the next day.

Chilean police arrested 12 Christian Democratic Party leaders on 12 January charging them with conducting an illegal political meeting. Two days later the group was banished to the remote north of the country. Other Christian Democratic leaders are concerned about the severity of the punishment, especially since the health of several of the detainees might be jeopardized by the harsh northern climate. Although the government's action, carried out with full knowledge of the media, may be the first hint of a crackdown on all political activity, it is more likely a warning that only a limited amount of politicking will be tolerated.

 four Montevideo policemen were arrested last week for mistreating a prisoner.  the police department was instructed last September to ensure the humane treatment of prisoners. In this case, when the chief of investigations and intelligence learned that the prisoner had been beaten, he ordered all involved to be arrested and tried for dereliction of duty.  the maximum sentences will be imposed (8 to 12 months in jail) in order to impress upon other security officials the seriousness of the government's intention to enforce humane treatment for prisoners.

Amnesty International has been trying to get permission from President Duvalier to send a high-level investigative team to Haiti. So far, however, the Haitians have put the organization off by saying that

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they are already negotiating with the Organization of American States for a visit by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and two such visits may be "in conflict." [REDACTED]

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