Peru Reopens Case of Mass Sterilization of Indigenous Women

Lima, May 15 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Peruvian judicial authorities granted the request from human rights groups to re-open the case of thousands of rural indigenous women forcefully sterilized under Alberto Fujimori dictatorship in the 1990s.

Human rights organizations had appealed a previous ruling issued in Jan. 2014, which found there was not enough evidence to maintain the investigation over the former dictator. Fujimori has been imprisoned since 2007 over corruption and human rights abuses, and claimed that the women were voluntarily sterilized.

Almost 350,000 people – most of them indigenous women living in poor rural areas, but also 22,000 men – were forcefully sterilized in order to reduce birth rate under Fujimori's dictatorship. They were either deceived, threatened, or even operated on without them knowing, reason why the crimes are being

described as genocide. Among them, over 2,000 women reported the crimes to local and international rights group, claiming they were operated on without their knowledge or consent.

"We've waited long enough for the government to investigate these 2,073 cases and hold ex-President Fujimori and his administration accountable for these reproductive rights abuses," said Maria Cedano, head of the Peruvian feminist organization DEMUS, one of several rights groups that had filed the complaint.

"There's no specific statement in the notice that the investigation will look into [Fujimori and his former officials], but prosecutors have the obligation to investigate the contextual element... to see if there was a state policy for the forced sterilizations, involving the then responsible people from the government, which would be the president and the ministry of health," said Monica Arango, a lawyer and director for Latin America and the Caribbean at the Center for Reproductive Rights.

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