

# Fujimori Ordered Back to Peru to Face Charges

## Ex-President Accused Of Graft, Rights Abuses

The Washington Post  
September 22, 2007

SANTIAGO, Chile, Sept. 21 -- The Chilean Supreme Court on Friday ruled that former Peruvian president [Alberto Fujimori](#) must be extradited back to his homeland to face human rights and corruption charges.

The decision ended a seven-year saga over the fate of one of [Latin America](#)'s most controversial figures -- a man who was hailed for defeating brutal guerrilla movements but who also was accused of embezzling millions of dollars from government coffers and of authorizing the operations of a secret death squad.

Fujimori, 69, who has been in [Chile](#) for nearly two years, was expected to be flown to [Peru](#) as soon as possible, likely within a few days. The court decision cannot be appealed.

In a telephone interview Friday with Radio Programas del Peru, Fujimori, rather than criticizing the ruling, called it "an opportunity to return . . . to reconnect with the people." He has repeatedly denied the accusations against him.

Peru filed 12 extradition petitions with Chile in January 2006. But under the terms of the extradition treaty between the countries, the Peruvian courts will be permitted to try Fujimori only on the charges for which he was extradited -- two related to alleged human rights violations and five related to alleged corruption. If convicted, he could face up to 30 years in prison.

Fujimori's 1990-2000 rule covered a volatile period in Peruvian history. Faced with economic chaos and a threat from two insurgencies -- the Shining Path and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement -- he took extraordinary steps to centralize power in the executive branch. He also was accused of authorizing the operations of a battalion of army intelligence officers that served as a secret paramilitary organization tasked with hunting down and killing suspected guerrillas.

Crimes by that battalion, the Colina Group, are now at the center of the human rights charges for which Fujimori will be extradited. One of the cases stems from an incident in July 1992 in which a group of masked men kidnapped nine students from their dorms and a professor from his residence at Enrique Guzmán y Valle National University of Education, called La Cantuta for the neighborhood where it is located outside [Lima](#). The victims' bodies were found months later with signs that they had been executed. The other case involves the Colina Group's 1991 killing of 15 people at a party in Barrios Altos in downtown Lima.

In Lima on Friday, critics of Fujimori expressed relief at the Chilean court's ruling, as did relatives of those killed in political violence during Fujimori's rule.

"I was overjoyed when I heard the news. We have been waiting 15 years for justice," said Gisela Ortiz, whose brother, Luis, was among those killed at La Cantuta.

The decision to extradite Fujimori comes seven years after he fled Peru at a time when his government was engulfed in a corruption scandal involving his intelligence chief, Vladimiro Montesinos. Fujimori was at a conference in [Brunei](#) in November 2000 when he flew to [Tokyo](#), moved into a hotel and faxed in his resignation as president. In [Japan](#), Fujimori -- the son of Japanese immigrants -- claimed citizenship and was thus protected from extradition to Peru.

Fujimori arrived in Chile in November 2005, unannounced in a private jet, with a meticulous media strategy for launching his political comeback. Those plans, however, were stymied by Chilean authorities, who arrested him at the airport and placed him in a [Santiago](#) jail. During his time in Chile, Fujimori ran an unsuccessful campaign for the Japanese Senate.

His case in Peru will be highly charged, and some observers fear it could easily be politicized. In a nationwide survey published Sunday by the group [Ipsos Apoyo](#), 75 percent of people surveyed said the former president should be extradited. Still, Fujimori has many supporters in Peru. His daughter Keiko was elected to Congress last year.

Martha Chávez, a former congresswoman who ran for president in 2006 on a pro-Fujimori ticket, said she had no confidence in the judiciary. "There are going to be all sorts of forces -- economic, ideological and political -- at work here," she said. "The groups that want a transparent process have already politicized this case."

Human rights activists, meanwhile, celebrated the decision to send Fujimori home. Just two months ago, a Supreme Court judge had ruled that the former president should not be extradited to Peru. The case was then appealed to the full panel.

"This decision will allow what should have always happened -- that Fujimori be judged in his country and by Peruvian judges," said Alfredo Etcheberry, the lead lawyer arguing on behalf of the extradition. "It is the Peruvian people who have to speak. The only role of Chile is to not be an obstacle in that."