

29 DEC 1996

Ambassador-Chronology

Following is the sequence of events:

DEC 17: MRTA guerrillas seized Japanese ambassador's residence and took captive more than 500 guests attending a reception held in honour of the Japanese emperor's birthday. Malaysian ambassador Ahmad Mokhtar Selat was among the captives.

Guerrillas demanded the release of more than 400 of their jailed comrades including their leader Victor Polay Campos.

The rebels later freed more than 80 women and the elderly including the mother and sister of President Alberto Fujimori.

DEC 18: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad sent a letter to Fujimori asking him to take appropriate measures to secure the release of all hostages.

Guerrillas released ambassadors from Germany, Canada, Greece and a Peruvian diplomat.

DEC 19: Guerrillas freed another three hostages. Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda arrived in Lima.

Ahmad Mokhtar conveyed a message from the guerrillas asking Malaysia to persuade Fujimori's government to start direct negotiations with them.

DEC 20: Another 38 hostages including the ambassadors of Brazil, South Korea and Egypt were freed.

DEC 21: In his first public statement on the crisis, Fujumori rejected all the rebels' demands and called on them to lay down their arms.

Malaysia's ambassador to Brazil Datuk Zainal Abidin Zain arrived in Lima to take temporary charge of the Malaysian embassy. Ahmad Mokhtar sent a letter to his wife, Jelial Ghalim, assuring his family that he was in good health.

DEC 22: The single biggest batch of hostages, 225 people who included the ambassadors of Austria, Cuba, Venezuela, Panama, Spain and diplomats of the United States, were freed.

DEC 24: Ambassador of Uruguay Tabari Bocalandro was released.

Ahmad Mokhtar sent another letter to his wife informing her that he was in good health.

DEC 25: Foreign Minister Datuk Ahmad Abdullah Badawi left for Peru on a special mission on the instruction of the Prime Minister to step up efforts to secure the early and safe release of Ahmad Mokhtar.

DEC 26: Ambassador of Guatemala Jose Maria Argueta was released.

Abdullah arrived in Lima. An explosion occurred outside the seized residence.

DEC 27: Abdullah met Fujimori to discuss the hostage crisis.

DEC 29: Ahmad Mokhtar and 19 other hostages released.

A total of 83 hostages remained in captivity.
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