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On May 26, Msgr. Jose Ramon Gurruchaga, bishop of Huaraz, told reporters that the government must make an effort to end strikes and workers' demands, because wages are increasingly "ridiculous." In a letter released over the weekend, Msgr. Fernando Vargas Ruiz de Somocurcio, bishop of Arequipa (1,000 south of Lima), said he was concerned over the "extreme poverty" experienced by workers, police agents and the unemployed. After asking, "until when are the people going to endure so much hunger," the bishop stated that despite the economic crisis, the government must resolve the strikes affecting the health and education sectors. As of May 26, public health sector employees had been on strike for 68 days, and public school teachers, 20 days. Gurruchaga said the strikers mentioned above had reached the maximum of their resistance, and cannot continue trying to feed their families on salaries the equivalent of US$50 per month. Soledad Lozano, leader of the educators' union (Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores de la Educacion Peruana (SUTEP), told reporters of the disappearance of a politician from Ica, and four teachers who had been thrown from helicopters in San Martin department. (Basic data from AFP, 05/26/91)

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