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## Paraguay leader withdraws anti-terrorism bill

By PEDRO SERVIN (AP) – 4 days ago

ASUNCION, Paraguay — President Fernando Lugo withdrew a vaguely written anti-terrorism bill Thursday after critics complained it would give judges too much discretion to limit individual freedoms.

Paraguayan law already provides for a sentence of up to 30 years in prison for terrorist actions, and as written, the bill would have enabled judges to interpret "any kind of meeting between three or four people" as terrorist-related if the participants were seen to be instigating violence, said Sen. Carlos Filizzola, a supporter of Lugo's government.

The senator noted the same bill was rejected when it was proposed to the previous Congress.

"The project should be rewritten to avoid enabling judges to jeopardize individual freedoms," Filizzola said.

Opposition Sen. Marcelo Duarte of the Patria Querida party criticized the president's decision. "Lugo is turning Paraguay into an unsafe country, and it proves that he cannot maintain a line of action as a leader," Duarte said.

Meanwhile, a Senate committee approved the draft of a separate bill that forbids families from using their assets to pay ransoms to kidnappers without government permission. The bill would give the state the responsibility of contacting and negotiating with kidnappers.

Lawmakers have had one particular family in mind while debating the bills: Rancher Fidel Zavala hasn't been heard from since he was kidnapped Oct. 15 from his property in the northern department of Concepcion. A group calling itself the Paraguayan People's Army has demanded a \$5 million ransom for his return.

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