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TRADE UNION BULLETIN

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Among the thousands of prisoners of conscience and victims of torture or execution throughout the world today are many workers, peasants and trade unionists.

Many have been arrested and ill-treated for the peaceful exercise of their human rights, including fundamental trade union rights.

The persecution they face is often unknown or little understood by the outside world, although international publicity can sometimes be their only hope of protection. In some cases, world attention has saved lives.

As part of its global and impartial campaign for the release of all prisoners of conscience, for fair trials for all political prisoners and for an end to torture and executions, Amnesty International publishes this regular bulletin to highlight the fate of these "forgotten prisoners".

This quarterly bulletin aims also to give trade unionists fresh details about current human rights issues and to encourage their support in mobilizing international solidarity for the universal protection of human rights.

AMERICAS

Chile

BANISHED WITHOUT CHARGE OR TRIAL

Trade unionists were among the 260 or so people who have been banished without charge or trial, reportedly for political reasons, to remote parts of Chile since the state of siege was declared by the President on 6 November 1984.

The President has the power to banish people without charge both under the provisions of the state of siege and under interim provision 24 of the constitution, which is invoked during a "state of danger to internal peace" (interim provision 24 has been continually in force since the promulgation of the constitution in 1981). In some cases of those banished since 6 November the government has stated that it has used the powers under the interim provision 24, but in other cases it is not known under which provision they have been banished.

Amnesty International is concerned too about reports that Julio Cámara Cortés, President of the Santiago Bus Workers Union, and Jaime Olivares Díaz, a bus conductor, were tortured while held in incommunicado detention by members of police intelligence, SICAR, at a police station. Arrested on 9 January 1985 at the bus company's headquarters in the San Miguel district of Santiago, they were released without charge on 10 January.

On 3 January 1985 members of the board of Asociación Gremial de Pequeños Agricultores y Artesanos - (AD-MAPU), Association of Small Farmers and Craftworkers, (an organization which campaigns for the rights of the Mapuche people), were apparently arrested during a raid on AD-MAPU's headquarters in Temuco and the following day taken to prison. They include the organization's President, José Santos Millao, who was banished for three months in April 1984. All were subsequently released without charge.

Banished from Santiago

On 9 November armed civilians believed to be members of the CNI (secret police) raided the headquarters of the Confederación Campesina "El Surco" (an agricultural workers' confederation) and of the Confederación Minera (Mineworkers' Confederation) in Santiago. Those arrested were taken to CNI detention centres where they remained in incommunicado detention until they were either released without charge or banished without trial.

Arrested at "El Surco" headquarters in Santiago on 9 November and then banished were: Enrique Avendaño Atenas (to Curaco de Veliz, X Region); Carlos Opazo Bascuñan (to Achao, X Region); Segundo Cancino Fernández (to Quemchí); Hernán Castaneda (to Quemchí).

Amnesty International believes that all these banished trade unionists have been punished solely on account of their non-violent trade union activities and that the banishment orders served on them should be revoked. It is concerned too lest those banished are not brought before a judge to rule on the legality of the arrest or brought to trial. They have no right of appeal against the measure except to request reconsideration by the authority which banished them. This constitutes a violation of Article 9.4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by Chile, which states that:

"Anyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings before a court, in order that that court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his detention and order his release if the detention is not lawful."