

External (for general distribution)

AI Index: NWS 01/28/86
Distr: SC

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To: All Sections
From: Press and Publications
Date: 10 September 1986

WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 28/86

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10 September

CHILE

ATTENTION PRESS OFFICERS

Following the assassination attempt on President Augusto Pinochet on 7 September, the government imposed a state of siege. Under its regulations, the authorities have sweeping powers of detention and censorship.

Amnesty International is receiving reports of many arrests under the state of siege. At least 50 people are reported to be detained in Santiago, many of them from opposition groups, the church and human rights organizations. Among those held between 7 and 8 September are six foreign priests, including Father Pierre Dubois, the parish priest of La Victoria Poblacion (Shanty Town). He has been an outspoken critic of human rights abuses in the past. Also detained are Herman Correa, President of the Movimiento Democratico Popular (MDP), Popular Democratic Movement; Ricardo Lagos, Leader of the Alianza Democratica, Democratic Alliance and Patricio Hales a member of a well-known family of oppositon politicians.

Jose Carrasco Tapia, a journalist with the magazine Analisis was reportedly taken from his home by armed men in civilian clothes claiming to be police. His body was later found in a cemetery with bullet wounds to the head.

Hundreds of people have been detained since mass demonstrations on 4 and 5 September. Some are being held at the headquarters of the CNI in Santiago. Commonly known as "Borgono Street", detainees have reportedly been tortured there in the past.

Amnesty International is concerned that the emergency powers may facilitate human rights abuses as happened in the last state of siege in force between November 1984 and June 1985.