
URGENT ACTION URGENT ACTION URGENT ACTION URGENT ACTION URGENT ACTION

13 September 83

FURTHER MASSACRES IN FIFTH DAY OF NATIONAL PROTEST - AT LEAST 15 KILLED

In the approach to the tenth anniversary of the military coup on Sunday, the Chilean people held the fifth Day of National Protest against the repressive policies of the military government of General Pinochet on 8 September. As in earlier days of action, trade unions, the banned political parties, students, professionals, former politicians and the shanty town dwellers all participated in the protests. Demonstrations continued throughout the weekend and entered this week, with repression taking a serious and bloody toll.

According to latest reports received by CCHR, at least 15 people have been killed by the security forces in the protests which have taken place over the last week, thus continuing the spiral of repression which has taken place since May. Over 1,000 people have been arrested and scores have been wounded, whether by bullet wounds or by beatings with batons. The President of the Christian Democrat Party, Gabriel Valdes said that the government had already provoked the conditions for such violence when the new Minister of the Interior, Sergio Onofre Jarpa (given responsibility for leading a 'political opening' in Chile), called on Chileans to defend themselves against protestors.

The deaths which have occurred in the last few days follow the pattern set since the first Day of National Protest in May, in which two people were shot dead. Members of the police in unmarked cars shoot on demonstrators and on bystanders and then drive off. Miguel Angel Zavala, a 23 yr old bus driver, was killed in this way on 8 September as he stood in the doorway of his home in the La Victoria shanty town. Another 23 yr old man, arrested by uniformed police officers late on Friday night on his way home from a demonstration in the Villa Sur shanty town, was found dead in a sand pit on Saturday 10 September. Maria Elena Rodriguez Rodriguez was shot in cold blood in Valparaiso by an off duty policeman who became irritated by demonstrators distributing leaflets and shouting anti-government slogans. The funeral ceremony for Miguel Angel Zavala on 10 September was dramatically interrupted when police, armed with shot guns, rained tear gas into a crowd of about 10,000 mourners and then charged attacking them with clubs. Monsignor Camilo Vial, the auxiliary bishop of Santiago told mourners at the little chapel in the La Victoria shanty town that 'It is the hour to fight because my people are suffering'.

In one of the most serious incidents, some 10,000 workers from the government Minimum Employment Scheme (PEM) in the Pudahuel district of Santiago were fired on after they refused to take part in demonstrations in support of the government outside the building where General Pinochet was to deliver his speech on the tenth anniversary of the military takeover. According to workers who spoke to a local radio station, they were called together in a football pitch by the local authorities and told that they would be given three days holiday in exchange for attending the demonstration. When they refused a busload of police arrived and started to disperse them with tear gas. At the same time a car, said by witnesses to belong to the local authority, arrived carrying three men, who opened fire for several minutes with automatic weapons. Two workers were killed, one of them 22 yr old Pedro Marin Novoa, and at least 20 others wounded. Also on Sunday, police used tear gas and clubs to break up hundreds of people at a cemetery after a special service for President Salvador Allende and for the thousands of people who died following the military coup on 11 September 1973. In his televised speech on Sunday 11 September, General Pinochet said 'I consider it a duty and a responsibility to the fatherland to "exterminate" terrorism and violence...'

Protests began as early as Tuesday 6 September when 300 students gathered at the National Library. 45 arrests were made and police pushed demonstrators up and down the street with batons. On the Day of Protest itself, 8 September, police used clubs, dogs and tear gas and water canons to break up a demonstration involving thousands of students. Marchers were pulled by the hair into police buses and beaten up and 250 arrests were made. The senior Christian Democrat politician, Patricio Aylwin, was thrown to the ground and beaten up by the security forces, while the Christian Democrat leader, Gabriel Valdes, was sprayed with a water canon when he attempted to address the demonstrators in Plaza Italia. In the evening, as on earlier Days of Protest, people banged pots and pans as a sign of protest and shanty town dwellers erected barricades to prevent the security forces from entering and repressing them.

The violence unleashed by the Pinochet regime's security forces on this occasion continue what has been an escalating wave of repression over the last 5 months, with thousands being detained on each Day of Protest and several victims from the gunfire. This culminated in August when 18,000 troops were brought on to the streets to enforce a curfew and which were under orders to 'act tough' and 'fire at the stomachs' of those on the streets. Thirty people were shot dead and over a hundred people received bullet wounds in the repression, which has been particularly intense in the shanty towns.

RECOMMENDED ACTION :

- Protest to the Chilean government about the recent repression, sending letters, telegrams, etc., to General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, Palacio La Moneda, Santiago, Chile, with copies to the Chilean Ambassador in London, Sr. Francisco Orrego Vicuna, Chilean Embassy, 12 Devonshire St., London W1. Make a direct protest call to the Embassy on 01-580-6392.
- Express your concern to the Special Rapporteur on Chile in the UN Commission on Human Rights, Mr Rajssoomer Lallah, Palais des Nations 1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland.

ATTITUDE OF BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO REPRESSION IN CHILE

In the international sphere, a number of governments and other individuals and bodies have referred to recent repression in Chile by emitting public statements or taking public actions to leave the Chilean government in no doubt as to their concern about the violation of human rights. These countries include USA, France, Sweden, Spain, Canada, Italy, West Germany. Inevitably these statements have varied from country to country but have been made nonetheless. The Pope has referred to repression in Chile on two recent occasions, also, as have several international trade union bodies.

In marked contrast to these statements, the British government has not issued its own independent statement and publicised it in order to express its concern at the violation of human rights in Chile. Given the very close relations between the Chilean military government and the British government the CCHR feels that a public statement by the British government calling for the restoration of human and democratic rights would have invaluable weight and could bring about important changes in the situation or at least contribute to such changes. The nearest that the government has come to making a statement was in reply to a journalist's question at a routine Foreign Office Press Conference on 31 August which makes no reference to the repression of 11 and 12 August in which 26 people were killed and which welcomes the Chilean government's moves to a 'political opening' in the transition to democracy. Please write or get your MP, trade union, church group etc., to write to Baroness Young, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London SW1, calling on the British government to:

- express its public concern, by means of an official statement, at the current violation of human rights by the Chilean government and to take the matter up officially with the Chilean authorities at every level;
- to initiate moves in the EEC and support the work of the UN, especially the work of the Special Rapporteur on Chile, to draw the attention of the international community to the human rights record of the Chilean government;
- to cancel arms supplies to the Chilean government in view of the fact that equipment would be used for internal repression and to give support and encouragement to those sectors in Chile striving for the restoration of human rights.