

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

FACTS & FIGURES

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Augusto Pinochet's Chile

The coup

- On 11 September 1973 General Augusto Pinochet led a military coup in Chile.
- The same day, then-President Salvador Allende committed suicide during the bombing of the Presidential Palace.
- Tens of thousands of men and women were subsequently arrested and tortured. Many are still missing and many thousands left the country as exiles.
- Amnesty International visited Chile in November 1973 to document human rights abuses and published a report a few months later.
- A plebiscite held in October 1988 decided the end of military rule and Chile held elections in 1989.
- In 1991, Patricio Aylwin took office as President of Chile.

Figures

- In 1991, the so-called "Retting Report" established that 2,296 people were victims of human rights violations and killed by security forces for political reasons, while nearly 1,000 were victims of enforced disappearance.
- In 2004, the Valech Commission submitted a supplementary report documenting 28,459 cases of illegal detention – in most cases, the detainees were tortured.
- A final review of the results of the Valech Commission established a total number of more than 40,000 victims of human rights violations between 1973 and 1990. The total number of people officially recognized as missing or murdered is 3,216, while 38,254 people are recognized as survivors of political imprisonment and/or torture.

Chile's "Amnesty Law"

- In March 1978, decree law 2191 – the so-called "Amnesty Law" – provided blanket amnesty for almost all crimes committed between September 11, 1973 and March 10, 1978. Some judges have applied the law to exempt members of the armed forces and the security forces from any responsibility for torture, extrajudicial-killings and other human rights violations.

- Since 1998, after the arrest of General Pinochet in London, some court decisions have avoided the application of the Amnesty Law. But it still remains in force and has been implemented.
- According to the latest report of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, 34 cases of enforced disappearance have not been investigated because the courts have applied the Amnesty Law.
- In 2006, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled that the Amnesty Law is inconsistent with Chile's legal obligations to investigate and hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations.
- Recent landmark cases that applied the Amnesty Law include the murder of Chilean-Spanish diplomat Carmelo Soria in 1996 and the union leader Pedro Enrique Poblete Córdova in 1998.
- According to official figures, since 2000 some 800 individuals have been convicted, indicted or charged. The judgments are final in a third of these cases. At present there are more than 1,000 active criminal cases.
- Until 2010 many cases of human rights abuses committed by Pinochet's security forces were tried in military courts.
- Despite military justice reform that year, the police and members of the armed forces involved in human rights violations are still being investigated and tried in military courts today without adequate guarantees of independence or impartiality.

Detention centres

During Pinochet's regime, hundreds of detention centres were created around Chile where people were detained and tortured, many of whom were never seen again.

Here some of the most notorious:

- National Stadium (Santiago): Around 40,000 detained between September and November 1973.
- Villa Grimaldi (Santiago): Around 4,500 detained between 1974 and 1977.
- Tres Alamos (Santiago): Around 400 detained between 1974 and 1975.
- Chacabuco (northern Chile): Around 1,800 detained between 1973 and 1975.
- Pisagua (Tarapaca region): Around 800 detained between 1973 and 1974.
- Quiriquina (An island in the Bay of Concepción): Around 1,000 detained between 1973 and 1975.
- Dawson Island: Around 400 detained between 1973 and 1974.
- Ship Esmeralda (Valparaiso): Around 100 detained and tortured there.
- Calle Londres 38 (Santiago): An estimated 2,000 detained and tortured there.