

Human Rights Watch denounces human rights violations in Chile for police abuse



Santiago de Chile, November 28 (RHC)-- Chilean security forces committed "serious human rights violations" during the now seven-week long protests against the neoliberal policies of President Sebastian Piñera and the lack of social rights in the South American nation, according to a report released by Human Rights Watch.

"There are hundreds of worrying complaints about excessive use of force in the streets and abuses against detainees, including brutal beatings and sexual abuse, that should be promptly and thoroughly investigated to ensure victims' access to justice," said the Director for Americas of HRW Jose Miguel Vivanco.

The organization interviewed more than 70 people during two weeks of investigation in Santiago and Valparaiso in November, among victims, police officers and authorities. The evidence collected is "consistent" to assert that the police "used force excessively in response to the protests and wounded thousands of people, regardless of whether they had participated in violent acts or not," according to the report.

Earlier this week, the National Institute of Human Rights of Chile (NHRI) reported that 2,808 people have been wounded during the nearly 40 days of demonstrations. According to the Chilean agency, 232 people suffered eye injuries (75 percent of the cases of gunshots).

HRW's director for the Americas added that such factors as "the indiscriminate and improper use of weapons and riot guns...facilitated serious violations of the rights of many Chileans."

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) along with numerous other rights groups condemned the constant violations of human rights by police and military against the population in Chile.

The human rights NGO met with President Piñera on Tuesday to recommend a series of reforms such as suspension of all use of pellet shotguns until an examination is conducted by independent authorities, reviewing police powers of detention, ensuring accountability for police abuses and misuse of less-lethal equipment.

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