

More than 3,700 injured and 10,000 detained in Chile over four months



Santiago de Chile, February 19 (RHC)-- Four months of protests in Chile against the neoliberal policies of Sebastian Piñera's government has resulted in more than 3,700 people injured, 951 filed complaints of torture and 195 for sexual violence, according to updated figures released Tuesday by the National Institute of Human Rights (INDH).

According to the agency, from October 17 to February 18, some 3,765 people were injured, of whom 445 suffered eye injuries. The data was gathered directly by its officials through observations of demonstrations, police stations, and health centers.

The organization reported that 2,122 people were injured by shots from different types of ammunition, with pellets being the most commonly used, causing 1,681 injuries. Regarding the protesters who have been arrested, the agency has visited 10,365 detainees in police stations. Some 7,490 men, 1,603 women, and 1,249 children and teenagers were interviewed by the organization.

During these interviews, 1,835 complaints were recorded, more than 1,000 for excessive use of force, 520 for torture and other cruel treatment, and 197 for sexual violence.

Regarding the legal actions presented, the INDH detailed the presentation of 1,312 legal actions, of which 951 are for torture and cruel treatment, 195 for sexual violence and 19 for attempted murder. The legal proceedings involved a total of 1,631 victims, of whom more than 900 were men, 321 women, and 271 children and adolescents.

Of all the legal accusations, 30 crimes against humanity and nine legal actions for torture and unlawful coercion, all grouped in one investigation, are aimed at Chile's Chief of Police Mario Rozas, who will be called to testify this week.

The regional Prosecutor of Valparaíso Claudia Pervancich, who is in charge of the investigation of crimes against human rights, will be carrying out the interrogations of the accused director-general.

Massive demonstrations against the Chilean government and his right-wing president Sebastián Piñera began in Santiago on Oct. 14 due to a 30-cent increase in the subway fare. While this measure was revoked by Piñera, social unrest increased in magnitude as the Chileans began to question "30 years" of neoliberal policies, which have implied a systematic withdrawal of economic and social rights for millions of people.

Since the beginning of the protests last October, the response of the security forces has been internationally condemned for its blatant disregard of human rights. Currently, prosecutors are investigating a number of deaths in the context of the crisis, including assassinations by the military and police forces.

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