

# URGENT ACTION

## UN EXPERTS ALARMED OVER IMPUNITY IN CHILE

On November 27, 2023, UN special rapporteurs on peaceful assembly and association and on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions publicly called on Chilean authorities to “advance the prosecution and sanction of state agents responsible for crimes committed during the 2019-2020 protests”. In a sharp statement, they raised their alarm at the lack of criminal prosecution of any police commander and reiterated that “it is the responsibility of the state to hold commanders accountable.” We urge the Prosecutor of the Centre-North Metropolitan Region to, should sufficient evidence exist, formally charge the commanders of Carabineros who could be responsible for these violations.

### TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Second Urgent Action 91.23**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

**Xavier Armendáriz**  
**Prosecutor of the Centre-North Metropolitan Region**  
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**Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés**  
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Dear Mr. Xavier Armendáriz,

I am writing to you gravely concerned over the prevailing impunity that surrounds the widespread human rights violations committed by the Chilean police during the repression of mass protests, especially with respect to the high command of Carabineros of Chile.

Since 2020, Amnesty International has time and again called on the Chilean Attorney General's Office to determine the responsibility of operational and strategic commanders for the crimes and violations committed by the police. We have also called on Chilean judicial authorities to “initiate proceedings regarding all those who may bear responsibility and, where appropriate, to prosecute them in order to ensure access to justice for victims and their families”. These commanders may include the Director General and the Director of National Directorate of Order and Security in office during the events.

There is a growing global cry against impunity in Chile. We call on you to formally present charges and start criminal proceedings against Carabineros' commanders, if there is sufficient admissible evidence to do so, within the framework of a fair trial and all due process guarantees.

Yours sincerely,

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

On October 18, 2019, massive protests erupted throughout Chile following an announcement of a rise in the price of public transport in Santiago, the capital. Many Chileans saw this as the final straw after decades of deteriorating access to economic, social, and cultural rights.

The largely peaceful protests were heavily repressed. Carabineros, Chile's police force, made constant and inappropriate use of less lethal weapons, frequently firing potentially lethal ammunition in an unjustified, widespread, and indiscriminate manner and in many cases, aiming at people's heads. On multiple events, Carabineros used tear gas excessively and unnecessarily, launching this chemical at hospitals, universities, homes, and even schools. Thousands of people were injured, including hundreds of people with serious eye injuries from rubber-coated buckshot and tear gas used indiscriminately and inappropriately. Other human rights violations included dozens of cases of torture, including sexual torture. Most of the human rights violations documented occurred at the hands of Carabineros. Carabineros commanders, whose responsibility it is to exercise control over their units and ensure that force is used in line with national and international law and standards, failed to prevent these human rights violations from occurring.

In October 2020, Amnesty International launched the landmark report [Eyes on Chile: Police violence and chain of command responsibility during the period of social unrest](#), concluding the possible criminal responsibility of at least three commanders of Carabineros for their tacit orders or deliberate omissions in the widespread violation of the right to physical integrity of demonstrators, and launched a global campaign demanding that the Attorney General's Office investigates Carabineros commanders. In its report, Amnesty International also recommended a structural reform of the Carabineros, because of the limitations resulting from its military nature and organic structure, and the need for greater control of the national police by civil authorities, as well as for urgent changes to ensure unreserved adherence to international human rights law.

As of September 2023, impunity for these events has been the norm. According to the National Human Rights Institute (INDH), by the end of 2022, the National Prosecutor's Office has brought charges in only 127 of the 10,568 complaints of human rights violations during the period of social unrest, resulting in a mere 27 convictions and eight acquittals. To date, no charges have been brought against any of the commanders of Carabineros during the period of social unrest. In the current investigation against the Carabineros high command, the Prosecutor's Office has summoned the Director General of Carabineros to testify six times, however, the highest police authority in charge of the country's security has yet to provide testimony, causing an obstacle in the investigation.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Spanish or your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** January 23, 2024

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Xavier Armendáriz (He/him)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr22/7259/2023/en/>