

URGENT ACTION

CHILEAN PROSECUTOR MUST ACT AGAINST IMPUNITY

Starting on October 18, 2019, the period of social unrest in Chile left hundreds of victims of police violence. Four years on, no police commanders have been held accountable for the widespread human rights violations committed by Carabineros, despite long-running criminal investigations into their role and alleged responsibility. Impunity cannot continue and justice cannot wait any longer. We call on 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 crimes and 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 **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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Dear Mr. Xavier Armendáriz,

I am writing to you due to the impunity that surrounds the widespread human rights violations committed during the period of social unrest, **the 'estallido social'**, that began on October 18, 2019. It is deeply concerning that, four years on from these events, impunity remains the rule, especially with respect to the high command of Carabineros of Chile.

Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the Chilean Attorney General's Office to clarify "the responsibility of operational and strategic commanders, who in their role as guarantors, tacitly ordered or permitted human rights violations to be committed repeatedly. It also [called] on the Judiciary Branch to initiate proceedings regarding all those who may bear responsibility and, where appropriate, to prosecute them to ensure access to justice for victims and their families".

Four years on, impunity cannot be justified, and justice cannot be delayed. 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. Government measures, never seen since the Pinochet government, did not put a stop to the protests. Carabineros, Chile's police force, made constant and inappropriate use of less lethal weapons, often firing potentially lethal ammunition in an unjustified, widespread, and indiscriminate manner. 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. 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 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 in charge of the police during the period of social unrest.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: November 27, 2023

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

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