

Report says Chilean protesters tortured and sexually abused by security forces



Santiago de Chile, October 23 (RHC)-- The National Institute of Human Rights in Chile (INDH) has confirmed that they have received cases of possible torture at the hands of the authorities amid protests that began against public transport fare hikes but have extended into an uprising against President Piñera's neo-liberal policies.

"Forced undressing, torture, shooting of civilians, physical, verbal abuse, beatings, 'delays' in driving detainees to police stations, keeping them in the vans with poor ventilation and overcrowding for hours on end", these are the reports received by the human rights NGO.

The group has also published what they believe to be the causes of the 15 deaths in the protests so far. According to the INDH, these deaths were the result of shots fired by soldiers, blows to the skull and thorax and for being hit by military vehicles.

There has even been evidence of sexual abuse carried against arrested protesters. "Two of the complaints are about acts of sexual violence against women in police stations. One of them reports having been put on the floor on top of the trash, being threatened with being shot if she moves, then

touching her body with a rifle and threatening to penetrate her with the gun. Another says that she has been completely undressed by police, forced to squat, insulted and threatened with sexual violence," the report said.

Director of the Sergio Micco has said that there is evidence that these acts of torture are taking place in the Baquedano metro station which has been commandeered by the authorities.

The popular movement against Piñera's neo-liberal government has grown stronger following the general strike called by the Chilean labor union federation (CUT). "Our goals are to say NO to the State of Emergency, recover peace and deepen democracy so that the people's fair demands are met," the CUT Secretary-General Nolberto Diaz.

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