

Abuses and police violence in Chile seen live on social networks



Santiago de Chile, October 28 (RHC)-- The Chilean social upheaval has left unpublished signs of police abuse and violence since the military dictatorship, although now social networks help spread these outrages almost live. Chileans observe incredulous scenes that seemed forgotten, such as people who identify themselves with their name while being detained by police or military agents so that the fact is recorded and the trail can be followed.

That was a common practice during the Augusto Pinochet regime (1973-1990). It served so that the witnesses of the detention could notify the families so that they denounce the facts to the courts or entities such as the Vicaria de la Solidaridad.

Now, however, there is almost always someone who records the arrest with a smartphone, uploads the video to social networks and sends the images into cyberspace.

Since the riots intensified last week, the Armed Forces took control of public order in much of the country and began night curfews, social networks are hotbeds of videos with violent detentions and weapons attacks against citizens.

There are videos recorded from windows, balconies or on the street in which agents appear beating detainees, dragging them badly wounded on the ground or shooting at point-blank range with pellet guns

of pellets and live ammunition firearms.

The Chilean Government has estimated 18 fatalities, including a minor, since the beginning of the conflict and the National Institute of Human Rights (INDH), a public but autonomous entity, maintains that five of the victims died at the hands of agents of the State, cases in which homicide complaints have been filed.

The INDH has also found 2,138 detainees and 376 injured, 173 from firearms, much more bulky figures than those of the Government. The agency has filed 44 lawsuits, 9 appeals for protection and 35 complaints of sexual violence, serious injuries and other crimes.

The Chilean Red Cross is also helping out to take care of the injured and its president, Patricio Acosta, said the most serious cases he has seen in recent days are those of a minor who lost an eye due to pellet shots and two other young people with pellets embedded in the neck and ear.

Given the seriousness of the events and the flood of complaints of police abuse, different sectors of society have come together to help the victims.

This is the case of the University of Chile, which created the Defensoría Jurídica U de Chile, a multidisciplinary team of students and professors of that house of studies that offers legal, psychological and medical assistance to people detained or injured during the mobilizations.

Attorney Nancy Yáñez, director of the Center for Human Rights of the Faculty of Law of the University of Chile, explained to EFE that the Legal Ombudsman has compiled "multiple complaints of abusive use of force, people injured by firearms, pellets and complaints of sexual abuse. "

Among the most serious cases that have been collected is a complaint of "really serious abuse" against an engineering student at the University of Chile and another of alleged torture at a police station at the Baquedano metro station, the latter being investigated.

"It is an unprecedented situation, we had no state of emergency and curfew to contain public unrest since 1987," said Yáñez, who considered that a democracy should have other "institutional means" to contain the disorders in the streets.

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