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Report on Political Imprisonment and Torture



“The Report confronts us with a truth that cannot be ignored: political imprisonment and torture were an institutional practice of the State, which is absolutely unacceptable and alien to Chile’s historical tradition.”

**Ricardo Lagos
President of Chile
December 6, 2004**

“Today, after months of listening to intimate stories, often whispered, told with pain and even with tears, and seeing the physical and psychological scars, as well as the injuries to the victims’ families and social lives – for which it is impossible in many cases to provide reparations to restore what was lost – of so many Chilean men and women who were imprisoned and tortured, we do not have the slightest doubt that this part of the truth we were entitled to, in order to achieve, as effectively as possible, the justice and reparations that the State owes to these, our fellow citizens, and to advance along the always difficult but necessary path to rapprochement and reconciliation among Chileans.”

The National Commission on
Political Imprisonment and Torture

A further step has been added to the Rettig Report (1991), the Dialogue Roundtable (1999) and the document “No Tomorrow Without Yesterday” (2003), in the search for truth, justice, and reparations for the victims of General Augusto Pinochet’s dictatorship.

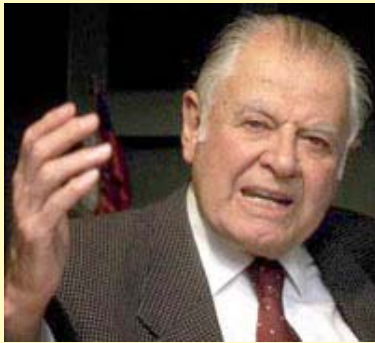
It was heartbreaking work. For six months, a commission appointed by the President of the Republic heard the testimony of 35,000 individuals who were imprisoned or tortured under the military dictatorship. Many of them were speaking about their experiences for the first time: not even their families were aware of what had happened to them.

Now they know, as does all of Chile. On November 28, President Ricardo Lagos officially released to the country the final report of the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture. “To never again experience it, never again deny it,” he stated firmly, adding: “I have felt in a very personal way the magnitude of the suffering, the senselessness of the extreme cruelty, the immensity of the pain. I would like to publicly express my solidarity, my affection, my concern, and my compassion to all of the victims and their families.”

The Report recognizes that “political imprisonment and torture were an institutional practice of the State,” unflinchingly describing the tortures applied and their physical and psychological consequences. It also proposes a series of reparatory measures, which it characterizes as “one of the principles of public international law in the area of State responsibility.”

Although the Report was met with criticism from a few quarters, and some victims and family members expressed frustration with it, the document was received favorably by the majority of Chileans. It also sparked an intense debate within the country which led the political parties, the press, the Judiciary, and the Armed Forces to revise their own attitudes toward the years in question.

The President noted: “I believe I am not wrong in saying that this Report constitutes an experience without precedent in the world. It has been able to enter, thirty-one years



“Thus it is that I dare, in my capacity of President of the Republic, to take on the representation of the nation as a whole, in order to ask, in its name, for forgiveness from the families of the victims.”

**President Patricio Aylwin
March 4, 1990**



Rettig Commission

“Torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted by or at the instigation of a public official on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or confession, punishing him for an act he has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating him or other persons. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to, lawful sanctions to the extent consistent with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.”

**Declaration Against Torture
Article 1
General Assembly of the United Nations
December 9, 1975**

later, into a dark dimension of our national life, a profound abyss of suffering and torment.”

The fourth step

The work of the Commission marks the fourth step of a process which was initiated in 1990 with the recovery of democracy: the quest to establish the truth about what happened during the military regime, to induce the various groups involved to acknowledge their responsibility for the disintegration of the Chilean democratic process, to summon the courage to look deeply into the facts, and to provide compensation to the victims.

The first step was represented by the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, created by Patricio Aylwin in April 1990, one month after taking office as President. The Commission, headed by respected jurist Raúl Rettig, attempted to establish as complete a picture as possible of the human rights violations, committed for political reasons by agents of the State or private individuals, which resulted in death or disappearances. The listed names of the victims – more than 3,200 – served as collective evidence of events in Chile that had never before been acknowledged. The information was recorded in the document known as the “Rettig Report.”

Later came measures to assist Chileans who had fled into exile as well as those who had lost their jobs for political reasons. Three fundamental concepts were pursued during each stage of the process: truth, justice, and reparations.



Dialogue Roundtable

Years later, in 1999, when General Pinochet was no longer commander-in-chief of the Army, the Dialogue Roundtable was established. Members of the Armed Forces, academics, leaders of human rights organizations, and representatives of various religious denominations met to seek a common truth about past events in Chile. For the first time, topics such as the secret burial of bodies and prisoners who were thrown into the sea were openly discussed, and the Armed Forces acknowledged their involvement in the deaths of Chilean citizens.

On August 12, 2003, 30 years after the coup d'état, President Lagos presented a new Human Rights Proposal to the country, entitled “There is No Tomorrow Without Yesterday.” The proposal included a range of measures aimed at uncovering the truth, encouraging the collection of reliable information about the fate of the detainees who disappeared during the military dictatorship, and streamlining legal processes. It also put forward measures to expand and enhance reparations to those victims and their families. The proposal is still under consideration in Congress, but it is expected to be approved by May 21, 2005.

“Let us be capable of recognizing the value of a country that has produced a Rettig Report, a Dialogue Roundtable and now the Valech Commission's report, which will be remembered as unique milestones for a country which has dared to confront its past with courage, as very few others have been able to do,” urged President Lagos.

The sheer magnitude of the testimony recorded in the Report broke down the barriers that had prevented the Armed Forces from acknowledging their involvement. As in previous steps, a national debate was provoked, but this time with a new angle: for the first time, there is a real possibility of national reconciliation. As President Lagos noted, “because we have been able to look the entire truth in the face, we can begin to overcome the pain, to heal the wounds.”

Torture as state policy

Chile is the first Latin American country to prepare an official report acknowledging that torture had been State policy, and it is the only country to launch a special government initiative – which has already been approved by Congress – to provide reparations to the victims.

The Report presents information confirming the conclusion that torture was not an isolated occurrence. In fact, it establishes that throughout the military regime, “torture was a habitual practice – although with varying levels of selectivity, according to the period – on the part of the Armed Forces and Carabineros (the uniformed police), as well as the security services, especially the DINA and CNI.” The torturers came from highly diverse ranks and levels, from simple village police

officers to staff officials of the Armed Forces, and from ordinary detectives to military strategists.

Another conclusive proof is seen in the large number of sites where acts of torture took place: 1,132, located throughout the country’s 13 regions. Of these, 802 were used most frequently, including military and police installations; public buildings; administrative offices; hospitals; factories; primary and secondary schools; universities and private facilities.

The Report notes that the thousands of Chilean torture victims were subjected to extreme abuse with the aim of “obtaining information, applying punishment or merely instilling fear” in the rest of the population. Many were forced to endure different forms of torture “successively or simultaneously.”

Based on the testimony received, the Commission reported that the forms of torture: repeated beatings; deliberate bodily injury; hanging; forced positions; electrical shocks; threats; simulated execution by firing squad; humiliation and psychological abuse; stripping; sexual assault and rape; forced witnessing or overhearing of the torture of others, especially the victim’s spouse or children; Russian roulette; forced witnessing of the execution by firing squad of other detainees; confinement under inhumane conditions; the deliberate withholding of necessities; sleep deprivation or interruption; suffocation; exposure to extreme temperatures; and sexual violence against women.

According to mental health experts, the damage caused by traumas such as those experienced in Chile can provoke effects such as poor performance, dropping out of school, episodes of depression and anxiety, or an ongoing state of melancholy or grief. But revealing the truth, as wrenching as it may be, has a liberating and healing effect for the victims.

Thirty years later, Juana Aguilera can talk about what happened: “During torture, one knows what horror is. After a torture session, one is afraid that everything will begin all over again, but one learns to resist



Monsignor Valech

During the final years of the military regime, the Commission’s president, Sergio Valech, headed the Vicariate of Solidarity, an entity of the Catholic Church dedicated to helping those suffering political persecution under Pinochet.

Valech has also served as human rights advisor to the four most recent archbishops of Santiago. In 1999, he was a member of the Dialogue Roundtable. His name is respected by all of the political parties, and the commander-in-chief of the Army, General Juan Emilio Cheyre, regularly calls to request his opinion on human rights issues.

in various ways. Perhaps I resisted because I told myself that I was not going to be assassinated, and for that reason I am still alive.”

The Commission proposed the creation of a National Human Rights Institute, which will be an autonomous and decentralized body, organized as a corporation with its own resources, tasked with promoting respect for individuals’ fundamental rights through education. It will also assume responsibility for the maintenance and confidentiality of the information on the subject accumulated in Chile, from the archives of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission to the work of the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ Statements from victims were collected not only in Chile but also in a number of foreign countries.
- ★ Participants in the work included hundreds of people from a range of professions, many of them young adults who had not yet been born in September 1973.
- ★ The Commission was composed of eight members from different parts of the political spectrum, appointed by the President of the Republic. It was headed by Bishop Sergio Valech: thus the name of the report.
- ★ The other Commission members are executive vice president María Luisa Sepúlveda, Miguel Luis Amunátegui, Luciano Fouillieux, José Antonio Gómez, Elizabeth Lira, Lucas Sierra, and Alvaro Varela.



The document is full of anonymous testimony that describes what happened with brutal frankness. A man, detained in September 1973, related the details of his confinement in a military facility: "During my first two weeks at Tejas Verdes, I was subjected to electrical shocks on the most sensitive parts of my body while tied to a wooden chair; I was beaten with rubber clubs and the butts of rifles; and I was hit over the ears with both hands at the same time."

Another, detained in October at the National Stadium, the country's largest sports arena, reported: "I was interrogated and tortured during three sessions in the bathrooms and changing rooms of the National Stadium's racetrack. While blindfolded, I was beaten from all sides, and at the same time they were telling me that I would never see my wife and my children again, and that they would hurt the youngest, who was three years old, worst of all. They hit me while I was standing up – it seemed to be with the back of the hand – cutting off my breath and making me vomit. They kicked me and threw me against the wall, sometimes

making blood run out of my nose. When I was sitting down, they touched me and said they were applying electricity. With tremendous slaps they hit me over the ears."

Women were also subjected to horrific practices. A woman, detained in January 1974, described her confinement in a DINA facility: "They moved me to another room where they made me strip completely. Later they tied my wrists to my ankles and pulled them together. Then they placed a bar between my wrists and ankles and suspended it from a piece of furniture. In this position they hit me over the ears and applied electricity to my temples, eyes, vagina, rectum, and breasts. They interrogated me for people's names (...). I told them that I didn't know anyone, so they resumed hitting me and applying electric shocks. They stuffed a rag in my mouth, which they sometimes took out so I could talk (...)."

FACTS

More than 94% of the victims certified by the Commission reported being subjected to torture during the course of their political imprisonment.

The Commission began its work on November 11, 2003, collecting testimony in 42 government offices and 110 localities throughout the country.

"Many people believe that these people (the torture victims) are filled with anger, but no: they are filled with grief."

María Luisa Sepúlveda,
vice president of the Commission

Women

The Commission considered it necessary to emphasize separately the environment of sexual violence affecting female detainees, "taking into consideration the characteristics of this violence, as well as its moral and cultural significance in Chilean society."

Among the 3,399 statements received from female victims, nearly all of them included reports of being subjected to sexual violence, and 316 women stated that they had been raped.

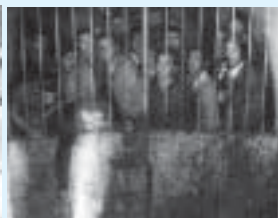
In addition, 229 were detained while pregnant; 20 of these miscarried due to the torture they suffered, while 15 gave birth to their babies in prison. "Thirteen women expressly stated that they became pregnant by their rapists. Of these pregnancies, six were carried to term."

A young woman living abroad wrote to the Commission to say that she had not yet been born when her mother was tortured, and that she had even been close to losing her on two occasions. The daughter felt that this injury had been passed on to her, and that she still carried it within her today, 30 years later.

A total of 1,132 locations throughout the country were used as centers for torture.



Detainees on September 11, 1973



National Stadium, 1973



Villa Grimaldi



Chacabuco prison camp (Second Region)



Quiriquina Island (Eighth Region)



La Serena's Arica Regiment (Fourth Region)



Prisoners on Dawson Island (Twelfth Region)

Reparations

A key component of the Report is the provision of legal and economic reparations to the victims. The central aim is to work toward restoring the honor of the individuals who suffered human rights violations, the majority of whom were accused of crimes they never committed.

It took Congress less than 48 hours to debate and approve the reparations bill submitted by the administration. The proposal included a pension of approximately 200 dollars for the 28,000 victims officially recognized by the Commission, as well as education, health and housing benefits in conformity with the framework of austerity and symbolism proposed by the government. In the area of health care, the approved measures include guaranteed technical assistance and rehabilitation to help victims overcome the traumas resulting from imprisonment and torture, if these are permanent and negatively affect the victim's social integration or performance at school or work.

In addition, the government determined that information about the 7,000 individuals who were not officially certified by the Commission would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

The Armed Forces' *mea culpa*

One of the most significant consequences of the Valech Report was the Armed Forces' public recognition that they had violated human rights after the military coup in 1973, although with different nuances.

While the Army assumed institutional responsibility for the violations, the Navy and Carabineros indicated that the authority is "individual," while the Air Force chose to attribute responsibility to the commanders.

In response to the commander-in-chief's statement, the British newspaper *The Guardian* noted that "last month, Chile's most senior soldier, General Juan Emilio Cheyre, issued an 'institutional' admission of guilt for offences by the army. That gesture and the Valech Report give the lie to what has for 30 years been the line taken by everyone from Gen Pinochet down: that abuse were the work of a handful of renegade officers."

Only days after the Report was released, the Army issued its own *mea culpa* through its commander-in-chief, General Juan Emilio Cheyre, who admitted: "Some people, not the unit as such, failed in their duties – without a doubt motivated by the climate of confrontation which was strongly felt in the country until 1990." With regard to the document, the general commented that "we assume it is the truth about the past."



General Juan Emilio Cheyre

"I believe that to look at the past in order to construct the future are something positive, and I want to state that what is most important is that we have been capable of facing the past. This is also true of the various military institutions; I believe it is tremendously powerful, and it gives us strength as a country. On a personal level, I feel proud of the reactions of our citizens to facts of this magnitude, which are so painful, but I would also like them to be understood within a future-oriented perspective."

President Ricardo Lagos
December 1, 2004

Although maintaining a certain distance from the Army's position, the Navy accepted "all of the testimony as true," but asserted that the cases attributed to naval officials represent "strictly individual" responsibilities, with a portion of the guilt falling to the commanders of that period.

"In Chile, human rights and the dignity of many innocent people were gravely violated by agents of the State. In this context, some members of the Navy, deviating from the proper doctrine, also participated in these tragic acts," stated Admiral Miguel Angel Vergara.

A communiqué from the Chilean Air Force (FACH) stressed that "the responsibilities always fall to the commanders, who have

the moral and legal obligation to ensure that the institution never departs from the aim for which it was created." Like the other branches, the FACH accepted the contents of the document, stating that it "constitutes a significant advance in the process of national reconciliation," and condemned the cases of torture.

Titling its report "The Missing Link," Argentina's *Página 12* emphasized the "mea culpa of the Chilean Air Force" regarding "its former commanders' responsibility for the practice of torture applied by the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet." It added that, "in contrast to the Army and the Air Force, the Navy and Carabineros have limited themselves to lamenting and repudiating the acts of torture committed by 'some officials' of those institutions."

Finally, the Carabineros affirmed that it "denounces the participation in cases of human rights violations of personnel from its ranks, among whom are numbered people who exercised hierarchical command and who were responsible through action or omission."

DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ The Air Force was the only military branch to validate the Rettig Report. In 1991, the commander-in-chief of the institution at the time, Fernando Matthei, declared: "I take full responsibility for what happened within my institution, both as indicated by law and as it is imposed upon me by my honor as a soldier."
- ★ Based on the Valech Report, the Navy acknowledged the use of torture on the training vessel *Esmeralda*, after having denied it for many years. By way of reparations, a proposal was made to enact an indemnification measure for the individuals who were tortured there, which is hoped to be implemented in late January.

The Supreme Court

The last of the institutions referred to in the Valech Report to announce its position was the Supreme Court, which acknowledged the breakdown of the rule of law in 1973 and the impossibility of fully exercising the rule of impartial justice during that period.

The document is severe with respect to “the abdication on the part of the judicial branch – with special reference to the Supreme Court – of some of its functions, leaving the victims of political repression in a state of defenselessness in the face of the arbitrary acts and human rights violations that were systematically and massively committed by agents of the State or persons in its service.”

This provoked a response from the judges, who signaled in a public declaration that the supposed complicity with the military “constitutes a serious charge, which lacks an objective foundation in the Report itself and which cannot be accepted, since reliable information does not exist, nor is it credible to maintain that distinguished judges were able to conspire with third parties to permit illegitimate detentions, torture, kidnapping and executions.”



The declaration, signed by a majority of 16 to 2 – with 18 of the 21 members participating in the discussion –, was read by the president of the Court, Marcos Libedinsky. A full consensus was not achieved, however: two justices were not in favor of issuing a statement, because they thought it would be better for the Court to work together, “once the information is collected, to punish the instigators and the guilty parties.”

The communications media

In addition, some of the communications media carried out their own analysis after the Report confirmed the “absence of

FACTS

The Valech Commission reviewed the cases of approximately 230 journalists who suffered political imprisonment. To these are added 70 cases of detainees who were linked to journalistic activity.

The Rettig Commission recognized the disappearance or execution of 23 journalists.

organs of public opinion capable of overseeing the actions committed by agents of the State or persons in its service.”

The College of Journalists praised the form and content of the Report, pointing to the work of many journalists who suffered persecution, exile, torture and even death, “for defending the right to inform people about the crimes that were being committed against hundreds of thousands of Chileans.”

However, the College also noted that its members “feel shame” with regard to the journalists who “tarnished the duty of

The Churches

Of all of the country's civilian institutions, the Report emphasized the protagonistic role of the churches, especially the Catholic Church. The main defenders of human rights in Chile during the Pinochet period were religious institutions or organizations affiliated with a religious denomination.

In this context, one of the most significant acts was the founding of the Episcopal Vicariate of Solidarity by Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez on January 1, 1976. “While its constant legal proceedings before the courts were not able to guarantee the safety of individuals and the protection of their fundamental rights, it is no less certain that the ongoing denunciation of the abuses contributed to identifying and monitoring the repression, thus reducing the validity of the strategy of denying its existence, which was aimed at ensuring discretionary action by withdrawing from any form of public scrutiny, internal or external,” notes the Report.

Another organization “worthy of mention” was the Christian Churches' Foundation for Social Assistance (Fundación de Ayuda Social de las Iglesias Cristianas, FASIC, 1975), which arose to defend “the human rights of the individuals who were most vulnerable and most oppressed and marginalized by the ruling system.”



Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez

The Valech Report also praised the efforts of human rights organizations in Chile and abroad, including Amnesty International, Americas Rights Watch and the World Council of Churches, among many others.

Special mention is made of the work of the International Red Cross Committee, whose reports (without violating its principles of confidentiality) would later assist in the preparation of the Rettig Report.

The Permanent Committee of the Episcopate characterized the Report as a “moment of national dignity,” stating with regard to the victims: “We lament and repudiate, once more, the injustices that they endured, and as pastors of souls, we remain available, as we have been in the past, to receive them and support them on their journey.”

revealing truth.” It called for “profound reflection upon those journalists who – out of fear, cowardice, comfort, opportunism, or directly, out of complicity – lied about or hid the truth.” However, it asked for “express admission from those communication media which allowed manipulation or lies to become an editorial choice.”

The political parties

One of the areas generating the fiercest polemics is the activity of civilian politicians and political parties during the military regime.

The parties making up the Concertación por la Democracia, the current governing coalition, unhesitatingly praised the Report on Political Imprisonment and Torture.

Adolfo Zaldívar, president of the Christian Democratic Party, emphasized that responsibility for the events of 1973 “falls to all of the political actors of that time. Nobody can stir up a wind without knowing that he might provoke a storm. But in addition, to honor the truth, our tragedy also had its origins beyond our borders: traces of it can be found in the halls of the White House and the Kremlin.” Regarding criminal responsibilities for the killings, disappearances and acts of torture, he signaled that “these are personal, although they might also be included in the ethical, political, military, and criminal responsibilities of those who held positions of power at that time.”



In its own evaluation of the Report, the leadership of the Socialist Party stated that “it is a historic step for the highest authority of the State to acknowledge that the institutional policy of State terrorism led to these horrific consequences, to the generalized torture of political prisoners, to sexual assault against nearly all of the women who were subjected to imprisonment and repression.”

At the same time, the party issued a forceful call to the rightist Independent Democratic Union (UDI) and to all those who

participated in these acts to “at least admit them and hopefully repent of them,” and thus to “advance toward historical truth.”

However, the Right did not go quite that far. The president of the UDI, Jovino Novoa, admitted that the party had responsibility “by omission” for acts of torture during the military government.



Regarding the possibility of prosecution for the perpetrators, he stated: “I see it as difficult and I don’t know if it would be good for the country, as painful as the facts may be. The courts are going to have to review any proposal that is made and decide whether there is criminal responsibility, although the moral responsibility already exists.”

Responding to Novoa’s comments, Spanish correspondent Robert Mur (*La Vanguardia*) commented: “The reaction to the Report on the part of the UDI, a party which shelters in its ranks a great proportion of Pinochet’s followers, has been significant. Its leaders accept the validity of the Report and condemn the tortures committed during the dictatorship, although they do not ask for forgiveness.”

Senator Alberto Espina, of the Renovación Nacional (RN), a party of the Right which also supported Pinochet, was more categorical in his remarks, saying that the Report “comes to complete the task of unveiling this painful segment of our recent history, whose proofs, along with disturbing our consciences, demand the clearest, most categorical and irrevocable rejection, because neither the historical context in which the deeds occurred nor the provocations that preceded them can justify practices foreign to civilized life and repudiated by the conscience of Humanity – even less if they were committed by agents of the State,



FACTS

A survey carried out by the Future Foundation (Fundación Futuro) showed that 76% of Chileans believe that civilians holding positions of responsibility during the military government knew about the systematic torture described in the Valech Report.

The Report stipulates that the names of the torturers provided in the thousands of statements from victims will not be revealed for 50 years. However, this does not restrict the courts’ ability to investigate each of the cases individually and to punish those responsible.

who are called upon to protect the dignity and rights of individuals.”

The only group to express clear disagreement with the Report’s presentation and the measures announced by President Lagos was the Juntos Podemos coalition, which includes the Communist and Humanist parties, along with members of the extra-parliamentary Left.

In a public declaration, they stated that the document “attempts to pave the path toward impunity for those responsible, since they are not named in the Report.”

“The climate of impunity which favored the serious human rights violations scrutinized by this Commission was nourished by the concentration of powers; the establishment of restrictive and abusive legislation; the inaction, when not the active complicity, of numerous and prominent members of the Judiciary, as well as certain civilian members of the regime; the prohibition of all civic expression or political activity; the total control of the communications media, and even the active support for the military government’s actions on the part of various print and television media.”

The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture

International reaction

Communications media throughout the world publicized, analyzed and commented on the Report's presentation, reprinting its main findings and soliciting opinions from leading international figures from the political and academic worlds.

The aspects of the Report emphasized most often in the press dispatches were the “economic compensation” to be provided to the victims and the acknowledgment that torture was a “State policy.” And “horror” is the most common term used to describe the document's contents.

The implications of the Report for Chilean democracy were also emphasized: *Frankfurter Rundschau* asserted that it “accelerates the return to democratic normality.”



The Report represents a “qualitative leap toward democracy,” asserted Germany's *Deutsche Welle*.

The British magazine *The Economist* stated that “the Report overturns the myth that torture was the work of sick-minded, over-enthusiastic subordinates. Instead, it is revealed as a systematic policy, financed by the budget and practised in more than 1,100 detention centres around the country.” And, even more importantly, “not even the armed forces dispute the facts.” and have accepted their “responsibility,” the journal noted that “such admissions are a sign of how Chile has changed.”

An editorial in *EI Comercio* (Ecuador) stated that the Report “brings an invaluable opportunity” to Latin America, where “democracy is undergoing one of the most critical phases of its history (...), affected by the grave disappointment felt by the people toward the system. The political parties have collapsed in many countries, and plans for the future lack the impetus of the utopias which formerly played a fundamental role, such as the quest for independence or massive structural changes. In this environment, a country admired for its economic and social achievements is providing an exemplary lesson in institutional ethics.”

“Something is happening in Chile,” affirmed Russia's *Pravda*. “Within less than a year, this traditional and conservative society has peacefully turned

But the thoroughness of the investigation - and the guts of the Chilean government in facing up to one of the darkest periods in the country's history - are remarkable. In most Latin countries, civil wars or dictatorships are often followed by a period of wishful amnesia, when everyone hopes the victims will just forget and society will move on.

The Chicago Tribune

back the pages to its darkest hours, becoming a modern community in which human rights are fully respected.”

Some sources recorded the victims' reactions. Canada's *The Globe and Mail* wrote that “the announcement was met with disappointment on the part of the victims, many of whom wanted more,” and that “although General Pinochet is not appearing before the Court” due to his poor mental health, “the Report is viewed as an important step toward an accurate historical record.” “A group of attorneys will launch a legal offensive to bring cases of human rights violations in Chile to justice,” reported *BBC Mundo*. The legal initiative will be directed “against those found responsible for the torture operations perpetrated during the military regime.”

And a column by Claudio Dantas in *Correio Braziliense* concluded: “The Chileans are providing us – Brazil and Latin America – with a lesson on sobriety and courage in the search for justice.” ♦

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