

commanders implemented a planned systematic, widespread policy of human rights violations. Thousands were detained, tortured, executed and disappeared.

The nature of these human rights violations has been officially recognized by the civilian government of Chile in its report to the UN Committee against Torture in 1990. The combined findings of the Reparation and Reconciliation Corporation, which was set up under the administration of President Patricio Aylwin in 1992, and the subsequent Truth and Reconciliation Commission, recorded 1,102 "disappearances" and 2,095 extrajudicial executions and deaths resulting from torture, making a total of 3,197 victims that were officially recognized by the Chilean state. However, those victims of torture who survived their ordeal were not included in the records of the commissions.

For over a quarter of a century relatives of the victims of human rights violations have campaigned for justice, as well as truth, with the support of human rights lawyers, organizations and judges. Several measures which were approved by the military government of General Augusto Pinochet prior to the transition to civilian rule, chiefly the Amnesty Law of 1978, have made it impossible for the relatives to find answers to the whereabouts of the "disappeared" and to obtain justice.

* The Minister of Defence has recently convened a "Mesa de Diálogo" (human rights discussions table), inviting human rights groups, lawyers and heads of the armed forces. This initiative has been strongly criticized by some human rights groups, including relatives of the "disappeared" who are sceptical of its outcome.

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