

# amnesty international news release

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## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MISSION REPORTS LARGE SCALE TORTURE IN CHILE

Torture of political prisoners, with the aid of foreign "experts", has taken place on a large scale in Chile since the September coup that overthrew President Allende's government, Amnesty International said today (Sunday). Amnesty called for a tribunal of enquiry into the torture charges, with international participation.

The statement was based on the report of a three-man Amnesty International mission which visited Chile in November to investigate the reported gross violations of human rights that followed the coup. The mission consisted of Professor Frank Newman, distinguished Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley, Judge Bruce W. Sumner, Presiding Judge of the Supreme Court of Orange County, California, and Mr Roger Plant, an Amnesty International researcher on Latin America.

"The report of our delegation has convinced us that torture has taken place on a large scale and was still continuing at the beginning of November. Subsequent reports indicate that it continues even now," Amnesty Secretary General Martin Ennals said in a letter to the head of the ruling junta in Chile, General Augusto Pinochet.

Mr. Ennals said the mission, which went to Chile with the prior agreement of the junta, was well received and was able to carry out its enquiries with considerable freedom. He expressed his appreciation to General Pinochet for this.

"I feel however obliged to say that, contrary to some statements issued by Chilean Governmental officials abroad, there is substantial evidence of a persistent and gross violation of the most fundamental human rights," Mr Ennals said. These included torture, political persecution, detention without charge or trial and executions. A copy of the mission report was sent to the Chilean government.

During their seven-day visit, the mission members interviewed government ministers and officials, foreign ambassadors, lawyers, prisoners and ex-prisoners and their relatives, priests and journalists. They went to the national stadium in Santiago where approximately a thousand political prisoners were

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still being held, spoke to many of them and saw visible signs of torture on some of their bodies.

The mission's report said that electric shock and beating had been employed during interrogation of prisoners and that foreign "experts" had been present, despite vigorous denials of this by the Foreign Ministry.

"Those charged with handling prisoners at the national stadium readily admitted that Brazilian police had been present at interrogations and that they were there to teach Chilean interrogators their methods," the mission's report said. "In fact, reference was specifically made to a four-day course given by Brazilian police at the Ministry of Defence."

Brazilian exiles told the mission that six of their countrymen had been tortured in Chile by Brazilian police.

(In September 1972, Amnesty International published a major report on the widespread use of torture in Brazil by police and military interrogators.)

The mission also reported being shown photographs of a disused mine in a desert where the government proposed to detain prisoners without trial for some months. One member described such conditions as appalling.

In his letter to General Pinochet, Mr. Ennals urged that:

- all executions cease and lists of those executed be published.
- "immediate steps be taken and proclaimed to establish tribunals of enquiry into allegations of torture and that international observers be invited to participate".
- lists of detainees be published "to assuage the fears of people who do not know where relatives and friends are detained, or even whether they are detained".
- the decision to try former members of the Allende government be rescinded because legislation that makes something a crime retroactively "is an affront to any system of justice".
- prisoners against whom charges are not filed, preparatory to trial, should be released immediately.
- the Chilean government "renew its assurances to respect the right of asylum".

Amnesty International also announced that this spring it will publish a more detailed report on human rights in Chile since the coup.

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