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C H I L E

ARBITRARY ARRESTS, BANISHMENT, TORTURE, UNACKNOWLEDGED DETENTION AND
SHORT-TERM "DISAPPEARANCES" IN PUDAHUEL, SANTIAGO

Amnesty International is concerned at the frequent reports it receives of human rights violations committed against people living in the poblaciones (shanty towns) in Chile. These violations include:

- widespread arbitrary and often violent arrests, usually without warrant;
- banishment to remote villages for three months without charge or trial on the orders of the Interior Ministry;
- torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment inflicted by all branches of security forces. In the poblaciones, uniformed police (carabineros), sometimes working with the Central Nacional de Informaciones (CNI - Chilean secret police), have been most frequently cited as being responsible, particularly by those arrested and detained for short periods in connection with "Days of Protest" or other demonstrations;
- unacknowledged detentions. In a number of cases this year, most of them in the poblaciones, all branches of security forces have denied having detained someone, only for that person later to be brought before a court after having been held in a police station or secret detention centre and reportedly tortured.
- "disappearances". Amnesty International is seriously concerned at reports that Juan Aguirre Ballesteros "disappeared" following his arrest by police in Pudahuel. All branches of security forces have denied that he had been arrested, in spite of statements by witnesses who saw the arrest and/or were detained with him. **

This document gives examples of victims of such human rights violations from Pudahuel, a district (comuna) on the western outskirts of Santiago, where many of the poblaciones are situated. The cases described, though confined to this area, are similar to those from other poblaciones which have been reported to Amnesty International.

**The body of Juan Aguirre Ballesteros has now been found: see page 9.

THE CASE OF PUDAHUEL

Amnesty International receives regular reports of arbitrary arrests and other human rights violations of concern to the organization in Pudahuel. These violations appear to intensify around the days on which peaceful demonstrations or protests have been called. Since May 1983, there have been eleven national "Days of Protest" organized by opposition groups to call for a return to democracy. Three days after the first protest on 11 May, in the early hours of the morning of 14 May, between five and ten thousand males over the age of fourteen were dragged out of their homes in several Santiago poblaciones. Taken to local football pitches and parks they were held for up to twelve hours. Some were beaten, and at least one was tortured with electricity, according to the legal complaint which the victim submitted to the courts. The operations, which involved all branches of security forces, were apparently organized as a direct reprisal for the "Day of Protest."

Many of those arrested and tortured or subjected to other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment have been punished indiscriminately, regardless of whether or not they had any involvement in the protests. Others, for example leaders and members of local church, community and pobladores organizations, have reportedly been targeted for punishment, usually in the form of harassment, short-term detention, torture and ill-treatment and banishment.

In August 1984, after a series of raids by security forces in Pudahuel which resulted in reports of arbitrary arrests and torture, a group of women from the district submitted a collective petition for protection to the Santiago Appeals Court on behalf of those living there on the grounds that local residents felt their physical security to be seriously threatened by police. They requested the appointment of a special judge to investigate the allegations of police persecution.

In one of the houses which were raided that month, that of a priest, three people were arbitrarily arrested by security forces and taken for interrogation in secret detention centres before being released without charge. Following the raid, the Vicar responsible for the West of Santiago said, in a statement, "In Pudahuel, many are the homes that have been raided many are the pobladores who have been arrested and ill-treated. When you see how the house of a priest has been attacked, it is not difficult to imagine the immoral, illegal, degrading and abusive treatment to which the poor people in our shanty towns have been subjected."

BANISHMENT

Pobladores have been among the many banished for three months on the orders of the Interior Ministry to villages in remote parts of Chile. Amnesty International is concerned that those affected by the measures are banished without charge or trial and without the right of appeal to an independent court. They are usually banished after a period of incommunicado detention, during which time they may have been tortured or ill-treated. They are then taken without warning to their places of banishment. Their families are not informed of the place of banishment until after their departure.

At the end of September 1983, forty pobladores were banished in this way after the government accused them of "acts of violence" during protests. However, no evidence was brought forward to support the allegations and the victims given no opportunity to take legal proceedings to defend themselves against them. Most were arrested without warrant in their homes and, after being taken to police stations, transferred to their places of banishment. Several were from Pudahuel: Armando Caroca Tapia (64) and his son Enrique, Mario López Bravo (59), Raúl Tobar Pinc Francisco Vásquez Vega, Luis Campos Salazar and Anacleto Apablaza Ayala.

Several have since left Chile because of constant harassment by security forces after they returned to their homes.

Four days before the national "Day of Protest" called for 27 March 1984, widespread arrests occurred, mainly in the poblaciones. Armando Caroca Tapia, Mario López Bravo, Francisco Vásquez Vega and Luis Campos Salazar were again arrested, and taken to the headquarters of Investigaciones (plainclothes police). On 5 April they were banished a second time for three months without charge or trial. Eleven other pobladores were also banished. Amnesty International appealed for the immediate lifting of the banishment order as it believed that they had been arrested solely as a preventive measure prior to the national Day of Protest. Plainclothes police also went to the homes of several of the other previously banished pobladores to arrest them (with a warrant issued by the Interior Ministry) but were unsuccessful as they were not there. The detention orders were however dropped a few days after the Day of Protest. Among those for whom an arrest warrant had been issued was Raúl Tobar Pino.

'DISAPPEARANCES' **

Amnesty International is seriously concerned at the "disappearance" of 23 year old worker, Juan Antonio Aguirre Ballesteros, after his arrest in Pudahuel on 4 September 1984. All branches of security forces have denied having arrested or detained him and the Appeals Court has rejected a petition for amparo (similar to habeas corpus) submitted on his behalf. The court apparently took the decision to reject the petition solely on the basis of the statements submitted to it by security forces, in spite of statements by witnesses who saw the arrest and were detained with him.

According to reports, on 4 September, the eleventh "Day of Protest", Juan Aguirre was walking to work at about 05.30h with two friends. They tried to run away when a police bus came towards them. Two were arrested, Juan Aguirre and Elias Huaiquimil, and made to get into a police bus where according to Elias' testimony they were beaten by uniformed police. They, and another detainee, Sergio Tapia Contreras, also from Pudahuel, were taken to the 26th Comisaría. Sergio Tapia alleges that "There I was stripped, tied to a wooden bench and they began to apply electricity all over my body. They questioned me about the death of Lieutenant Allende [a policeman killed in Pudahuel in an unclarified incident - see Arbitrary Arrests and Torture], about who had been burning buses, about explosives, political activities and the names of people. The torture lasted five hours and they kept me tied to the bench. Then I was hung up by one arm, which had to support the whole of the weight of my body..."

Sergio Tapia alleges also that "Almost immediately they began to interrogate and torture the other youth (who I later found out to be Juan Aguirre Ballesteros). I could hear a kind of loud humming coming from the electricity generating machine. Electricity was again applied to the youth. There was a loud scream immediately, and then silence. I noticed that the agents who were torturing suddenly became very agitated as they were running about and tried to remove the youth. One of them said something like "We've lost this ...", while another said "This ... couldn't take it". Then I heard voices calling for an ambulance..."

Both Sergio Tapia and Elias Huaiquimil were reportedly brought before the Military Prosecutor the following day and transferred to prison. They were accused of violating the Arms Control Law. However, the Military prosecutor later dismissed the accusations and released them unconditionally. He did, however, order that they be given a physical examination by the Instituto Médico Legal (Forensic Institute) because of their poor physical condition, which is believed to have been a result of the torture.

Juan Aguirre was not released. His whereabouts has not been made known, and there is growing concern for his physical safety. His father has submitted a legal complaint to the courts alleging arrest, kidnapping, torture and possible murder against carabineros.

** The body of Juan Aguirre has now been found. See page 9.

UNACKNOWLEDGED DETENTIONS

Amnesty International has received information indicating that since 29 March 1984, there have been 23 cases where, as in the case of Juan Aguirre, the detention of individuals has been denied by the arresting authority, which in many of these cases has been carabineros in Pudahuel) and by other branches of security forces. In these cases, however, their detention has been proven when they have been subsequently brought before the courts by those who arrested them.

Sergio Inostroza Márquez and his sixteen year old son were missing for eleven days after their arrest. The two were among more than forty people who were arrested in Pudahuel by police investigating an attack on a supermarket on 4 May in which a policeman was fatally injured and two pobladores killed.

Sergio Inostroza, a leader of the Coordinadora Metropolitana de Pobladores (Metropolitan Shanty Town Dwellers' Coordinating Body), and his son were reportedly arrested at their home in Pudahuel on 4 May. When his wife went to the 26th Comisaría to find out what had happened to them she was told that they were not being held there, in spite of the fact that she saw her husband's overcoat on a chair. Uniformed and plainclothes police, and the CNI all denied that they were holding the two, and the Interior Ministry indicated that a warrant had not been issued for their arrest. A complaint of kidnapping was submitted to the courts, and the Vicaría de la Solidaridad (a church human rights organization) gave a press conference at which they expressed their fears that security forces were resuming the practice of "disappearances" which had been frequently used against known or suspected opponents of the government between 1973 and 1977.

On 14 May, Sergio Inostroza and his son, together with nineteen others who had been arrested in Pudahuel around 9 May, were taken from a police station to the Military Prosecutor's Office. Some were transferred to prison on charges under the Arms Control Law, others were released without charge.

Amnesty International is concerned that Sergio Inostroza and his son were held for eleven days in unacknowledged detention and at reports that during that period they, and several others detained with them were taken from the police station to an undisclosed place where they were tortured. Sergio Inostroza alleges that his arm was broken in three places while he was tied to a metal bedframe and given electric shocks. He says he was also made to watch his son tortured with electricity. His son was eventually released without charge from prison, but Sergio Inostroza is believed to be still in detention. Amnesty International is seeking further information about his legal situation and that of the other detainees.

ARBITRARY ARRESTS, TORTURE AND OTHER FORMS OF CRUEL, INHUMAN AND DEGRADING TREATMENT

Amnesty International continues to receive numerous reports of arbitrary arrests, torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in Pudahuel and other población areas, especially committed by police around days on which protests or demonstrations have been called. The methods of torture and ill-treatment described by victims include: electric shocks, beatings to different parts of the body including the head, and soles of the feet, punches, kicks, slaps (especially around the face and ears), the victim stripped and made to walk over glass, made to put out bonfires with their bare hands or buttocks, dragged by the hair, forced to remain in uncomfortable positions for a long time without food or water, continuous beatings over the head or kidney area with a heavy sand bag, victims made to run naked down the street while shot at, mock executions.

During the last "Day of Protest" on 4 September, a poblador alleged that he had part of his scalp cut away by six men thought to be military personnel using a kind of bayonet (yatagán). They are also reported to have cut his back and thigh and tried to rip his clothes off with it. He was then made to run down the street

naked and shot at.

During the same "Day of Protest", a 23 year old youth from Pudahuel alleged that he was dragged out of a house by three uniformed policemen, tied to a tree, then stripped and beaten repeatedly on the back and legs with some kind of stick. He said that the barrel of a gun was placed by his mouth and he was told that he would be shot if he moved. Before going away the police are said to have burnt his clothes.

Others are said to have been tortured after being arrested by police or security forces ordered by the courts to investigate a particular incident. Police have apparently abused these orders to carry out extensive and indiscriminate raids on the poblaciones, resulting in many arbitrary arrests and torture. Human rights groups claim that the fact that most of the people arrested in such raids have later been found to have no connections with the incident under investigation suggests that the police abused the investigations orders in order to intimidate people living in the poblaciones and prevent them from taking part in the political process currently under way in Chile.

On 26 July 1984, uniformed police lieutenant Julio Allende Ovalle was fatally shot in Pudahuel. A few days later, his fiancée committed suicide. Beginning the same day Allende was killed, police began a series of raids in the area which continued for several weeks. The raids and resulting human rights abuses, including arbitrary and often violent arrests, and torture, were described by Chilean human rights organizations as acts of "vengeance" for the death, and an abuse by police of the order given to police by the Third Military Prosecutor to investigate the killing.

The facts surrounding the killing are still unclear, as the official version conflicts with that of local residents. According to police, Allende was shot dead when a police bus was ambushed by a group of "terrorists" at about 21.00h in Pudahuel. According to local residents, the police bus had arrived to dismantle one of the barricades which had been set up during 26 July as part of a general strike called by organizations in the district to protest at the social, economic and human rights situation there. They say that when some of the police got out of the bus, stones were thrown by a group of protestors. Shots were fired from the police bus and Lieutenant Allende (who was dressed in civilian clothing at the time) was killed.

Police then reportedly began the raids and intensive house to house searches, mostly late at night, which went on over the next two or three weeks. In the petition for protection which a group of women from Pudahuel submitted to the courts in August, they stated that "On 26 and 31 July and 2 and 3 August, police personnel and security forces carried out massive actions and operations.. On 31 July, at about 02.00h uniformed police and army personnel wearing combat uniform and civilian agents wearing balaclavas carried out raids and searches on huge sectors...The pobladores were violently taken out of their homes, many of them being arrested. Their relatives had to go from police station to police station asking if they were being held there, and received negative answers, especially from the 26th Comisaría."

One of those arrested on 31 July gave the following account of what happened to him: "I was sleeping that night when three men dressed in combat uniforms and hooded came into the room I was in with my wife. They woke me up with the butts of their machine guns. They took me out dressed as I was and made me get into a big bus where there were many other detainees. We were taken to a place like a warehouse [galpón]. There they applied electricity to my feet, genitals, back and neck. They told me that I had been seen with a gun and that they had eye-witnesses." The following day he was released without charge but lost his job as a result of his detention.

In another incident, in the evening of 26 July, a group of young people aged between 18 and 26 were playing football in the street when men wearing combat dress are said to have arrived firing their guns. According to reports, they cordoned off the area, cut off the street lighting and set up guards at the two entrances to the area. The young people dispersed, some taking refuge in nearby houses. Witnesses say that one of them, Mario González, was shot in the legs five times after he had climbed onto the roof of one of the houses, that he was dragged off by his feet and thrown into the back of a red van which was marked Servicio Técnico de Radio y TV (Technical Radio and TV Service). He is believed to have been taken into police custody, charged with assaulting police and is now being held in the hospital wing of the Santiago Penitentiary where he is recovering from the injuries received during his arrest. Ten people were arrested in all, among them a mentally handicapped youth, Miguel Almendra Fuentealba. Another of those arrested, 26 year old Victor Cornejo Araos, is said to have suffered internal haemorrhages as a result of being kicked and hit with the butt of a machine gun. Witnesses say that police tried to revive him after he fell unconscious. As they were not successful, they carried him out to the red van with the other detainees. He is said to be still receiving hospital treatment for the injuries he received during his arrest.

All those arrested during this incident were reportedly taken to a police station and then to a place that they were unable to identify. There they are said to have been photographed holding guns and wearing balaclavas. Some alleged they were beaten or burnt with cigarette lighters. They have all since been released on bail after being charged with assaulting police.

Of the approximately fifty people arrested in the aftermath of the killing of Lieutenant Allende, most were released without charge shortly after their arrest. Six remained in detention for more than ten days, but none of them were charged with anything to do with the killing.

Germán Ricardo Llanca González (20), Ana Alejandra Flores Lara (18), Eduardo Antonio Pinto Caro (17), Roberto Gálvez Chacano (18), Claudio Antonio Gómez Jaque (18) and Marcos Aurelio Hernández Rozas (22) were arrested by police and/or military personnel between 31 July and 4 August. The media gave wide coverage to the official statements describing them as "extremists" involved in the killing of Allende. All except Germán Llanca were held in police custody until 9 August. Human rights lawyers claim that police failed to inform the Military Prosecutor of the arrests within the twenty four hours specified in the Code of Military Justice. It was only after relatives and lawyers had insisted before the courts that he ordered that the detainees be brought before him on 9 August. They were then transferred to prison until 14 August when Eduardo Pinto, Ana Flores and Marcos Hernández were released without charge. Roberto Gálvez and Claudio Gómez, both students, were charged with offences unrelated to the killing, offences which, according to human rights lawyers, are completely without proof. Germán Llanca was held in police custody until around 15 August when he was transferred to prison. He was released without charge on 17 August by the Military Prosecutor.

All were reportedly tortured with electricity while in detention. Amnesty International has received details of the arrest and treatment while in detention of Ana Flores and Germán Llanca.

Ana Alejandra Flores Lara

"They came to look for me in the early hours of the morning of 31 July. They were civilian agents* wearing balaclavas. They ripped mattresses, broke suitcases, the ceiling, everything. They got me out of bed, asking me about Jorge Echeverría. He is the father of my two year old daughter. I haven't seen him for a while....It wasn't the first time they came. In September 1983, they came looking for my brother, saying he was the instigator of the land occupations in Pudahuel. He had been in Mexico since May that year! In March

* [believed to be members of the security forces]

they came back and told me that if I was lying about not seeing my brother, I would pay for it.

That night, they made me get first into a car, and then into a large van. They placed tape over my eyes and took me to a place where they tortured me with electricity. There was an iron door at the entrance. First I was given weak electric shocks to the ears and breasts. But as I didn't tell them anything about Jorge, they increased the current and put a cloth in my mouth because I was foaming at the mouth. Then the "good" person appeared, who talked to me, gave me coffee and a blanket. Then they took some photographs and we left. One of them gave me 100 pesos and told me "Take it for later, for the bus". It was daytime and I thought I had been taken to a place with uniformed police. Someone took off my blindfold. They told me it was the sixth Comisaría and asked me what I was doing there. I told them...I left, free, at midday. It was the first of August."

She was arrested again on 4 August.

"They arrived at 11.30a.m., civilians and uniformed police in combat dress. They again raided the house and took me blindfold to a place where my shoulders and height were measured, and they asked me whether I wanted a red or black coffin. Then for the first time they asked me about what I had been doing on 26 July. I was punched hard in the face and threatened to give me electric shocks and rape me with a dog. They also undid my blouse and exposed one breast. They started mocking me. Then they tied me for several hours to a bedframe. At about 05.00a.m. - I could hear the radio - they put me in the car boot and we left. After driving round and round, they said, 'No we're going to leave you with the cops [los pacos].' I heard voices and someone took off the blindfold. I was back at the 6th Comisaría. A policeman said, 'put her down as being arrested at 12.30 today in Pudahuel'. By that time, I had already been detained for 24 hours."

On 8 August, she was reportedly removed from the police station, again in the boot of a car and taken to a secret place where she was made to sign a statement which said "Political Affiliation: MIR*". "Does not belong to any political party but is actively involved in resistance in Pudahuel". After being brought before the Military Prosecutor on 9 August she was transferred to San Miguel prison. She was released unconditionally on 14 August.

A legal complaint alleging torture has been submitted to the courts.

Germán Llanca González, member of the Consejo Pastoral Juvenil (Pastoral Youth Council) and of the Juventud Obrera Católica (Catholic Workers' Youth Organization)

He was reportedly arrested on 3 August by a group of heavily armed, hooded men. Germán Llanca is a friend of political prisoner Pedro Abarca, arrested in March 1984. Shortly after Abarca's arrest, Llanca's house had been raided by security forces who were looking for him. He was not arrested as he was not at home. Lawyers took action before the courts and established that there was no warrant for his arrest. This time, on 3 August, he was driven away in a van.

"The interrogation and the threats began immediately, on the van. They told me that my sister and mother had been taken in another car." After about 40 minutes journey, they arrived at a place where trains and church bells could be heard.

"They handcuffed me to a taught bedframe, placed a wet bag over my genitals and began applying electricity. They started asking me about Pedro. It lasted about two to three hours."

* MIR - Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Movement of the Revolutionary Left)

The agents then left him for a while. He alleged that he could hear the screams of other people being tortured. Another detainee, Roberto Gálvez, was brought to the same room. After midday, his captors came again, threatening him.

"They made a whole show of handcuffing me and fastening my hands. Then they said "We'll take them off before shooting him." Then they put me in the boot of a car and the one who closed it said, "Why didn't you collaborate, my friend? Those blokes are killers. Why didn't you help?", trying to confuse me. When we arrived at the destination, which was the 18 Comisaría (though I didn't know it at the time), they checked the blindfold over my eyes. "Well, kid, so you don't know anything? Take the handcuffs off." They touched the blindfold and said, "You won't see much like that, it's boring to see how one dies. Finally they warned me, "If you don't collaborate, it'll be the same show as usual. You know what that is - on some corner, you will go and paint graffiti or you will be walking with a pistol and there will be a confrontation between you and us...like Loreto." [María Loreto Castillo, alleged to have been arrested and blown up with a bomb by security forces].

Each day after that he was reportedly removed from the police station during the day and taken to be tortured. At night he was returned. He said the torture sessions consisted in tying him face down on a type of bench and applying strong electric shocks to his anus, testicles, penis, scars, thighs and stomach. He was also beaten and threatened. Several people are said to have taken part in the sessions, one acting as the "kind" person, another the "bad" one and a third, the "cruel" one. During the rest periods he said he was seen by the "psychologist".

They started to call him Victor and he was only allowed to answer to that name. On the Wednesday, someone who acted as the chief came. "He asked if I had collaborated. As the answer was negative, he replied, "OK. You know what to do." "The bullets were passing by and one of them said "We'll make you look nice for the newspapers." The "good" one intervened and asked them to give him one more chance to get me to talk. In the end the chief said he would come back later and if they hadn't been successful they would take me to the fields [to be killed]." He was later subjected to a mock execution. "They threw me face down to the floor. The bullets were passing by. They rubbed the barrel of the submachine gun against my cheek."

Germán Llanca was brought before the Military Prosecutor around 15 August and transferred to prison. After being questioned about the death of Lieutenant Allende and also the case relating to Pedro Abarca Castro, he was released without charge on 17 August.

Other Torture Victims in Pudahuel

There were several other arrests in Pudahuel during 4 September, the last "Day of Protest", apart from that of Sergio Tapia, Juan Aguirre and Elias Huaquimil. Amnesty International has received details of the torture to which one of them alleged he was subjected. Darío Ibañez Díaz was arrested with his two sons, Darío and Dagoberto Ibañez Rocha, reportedly by uniformed police and armed civilians who raided their home without warrant.

"We were all [his five children, wife and himself] forced into a small room while they carried out the raid. Our Alsatian dog became angry and was killed with two shots." After being taken to the 26th Comisaría, where he alleged he could hear the screams of young people, he was transferred to a secret detention centre. There, "They took off my jacket, threw me down on a table on which they placed a kind of foam [mattress]. They handcuffed my hands behind my head and tied down my legs. They put a type of plug in my ears and asked me if I had anything to say. As I said no, they began to give me very strong electric shocks. I felt as if my head would burst. After ten minutes, someone ordered, "Give this bastard another ten minutes, he's come prepared for this." In the

meantime, he was beating me on the legs and stomach and another was hitting me in the testicles. After about another five minutes of electric shocks, one shouted to the other, "Don't burst his lungs". I fainted at that moment."

When he came round, they took him off the table and suspended him by the handcuffs. He was reportedly kept in this position until midnight. (He had been arrested at midday.) Every two hours, he alleged, a man came and asked him if he "remembered" anything. On Friday 7 September he was abandoned in a street. Carabineros reportedly denied that he had been arrested. Darío Ibañez Rocha 19 years old, was reportedly badly tortured but no details are available. He was taken to the 26 Comisaría after arrest and released without charge after being brought before the Military Prosecutor with Sergio Tapia and Elias Huaiquimil on 10 September.

Sergio Inostroza Márquez (see Unacknowledged Detentions)

The following is an extract of Sergio Inostroza's testimony about the treatment he received in a secret detention centre:

"I was tortured every day. Things started moving at about seven each evening and carried on all night. Only once did they leave me alone, when my chest became inflamed and I had the beginnings of a heart attack, after they broke my arm. ...

They tied my arms down and then one of them ordered: "Give this bastard 220 []...It was terrible. I heard the bone breaking distinctly...They broke it in three parts....They put strong light bulbs above my eyes and electricity on my forehead and on the back of my neck, as well as several blows which stunned me...Since they let me out [of the secret detention centre] I can hardly see anything. I can't read any more. ...

They tortured my son in front of me. They put him on a metal bedframe and gave him electric shocks, just like they did to me. They didn't even respect his age...."

Gastón Roldán Arellano, 26, leader of the Comando de Organizaciones Populares de Pudahuel (COPP - Pudahuel People's Organizations Command), arrested in connection with the same incidents as Sergio Inostroza on 9 May 1984.

He alleges: "I was tortured every day. They applied electricity to the most sensitive areas of my body; chest, testicles, ears. The most terrible part was when they put the wires in my ears and applied the shocks..."

José Míngues Naranjo, 30, arrested at home on 9 May, in connection with above. He alleged that a foam hood was placed over his head and he was then beaten on the head with a leather bag full of sand which was attached to a pole. Santiago Cerda Castro, arrested in connection with the same incident, alleged that CNI agents marked with electricity the initials of the CNI on one of his legs.

Amnesty International cannot take responsibility for the specific contents of the testimonies in this document. However, the information in them is consistent with other allegations and reports of torture in Chile.

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STOP PRESS: Amnesty International has learnt that on 24 October 1984, a headless and mutilated corpse found by a river near Santiago was identified as being that of Juan Aguirre Ballesteros. Reports say that identification was possible because relatives recognised Juan Aguirre's clothes.

The following is a translation of a telex sent to President Pinochet

by Amnesty International on 25 October:

"Amnesty International gravely concerned by reports of identification of remains of Juan Aguirre Ballesteros who, according to witnesses, was last seen in custody uniformed police in the 26 Comisaría. Available information indicates that Juan Aguirre may have died as a result of torture to which he is said to have been subjected. This death, and others in which agents of the Central Nacional de Informaciones have been involved, suggest the existence of a deliberate policy to physically eliminate political opponents. We urge Your Excellency to intervene to ensure that the security forces put an immediate end to these activities, which violate fundamental human rights, such as the right to life, and to protection against torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Furthermore, we request assurances from Your Excellency that the investigation being undertaken by the judiciary to clarify these regrettable events proceed unhindered.

Yours sincerely,
Wesley Gryk
for the Secretary General
Amnesty International
London

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