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Chile: Notes On Tallies Of Human Rights Abuse & Exiles, 1973-1988

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According to reports by the Catholic Archdiocese’s Vicariate of Solidarity (Santiago), a minimum of 734 Chileans disappeared after arrest by government security forces during the 1973-1988 period. The Vicariate says it has evidence that 200 of the total were executed, while many died as a result of injuries sustained during torture. Between 1983 and 1986 alone, 117 Chileans were shot to death by police, soldiers or paramilitary forces during street demonstrations. Next, the Vicariate claims that between 1973 and 1988, some 100,000 persons were illegally detained, sentenced to internal exile at isolated locations, or prosecuted and incarcerated for political reasons. As of Sept. 9, Chilean political prisoners numbered an estimated 500, and another 2,000 were on parole for political offenses. Additional thousands of Chileans, according the Vicariate, have suffered physical and psychological abuse resulting from repression of demonstrations, military surveillance and control of entire neighborhoods, and threats and harassment affecting popular organization leaders, judges, journalists and human rights activists. The Christian Churches Social Assistance Foundation (Fundacion de Ayuda Social de Iglesias Cristianas-FASIC) reports that 318 political prisoners are being prosecuted under the arms control law; 168 under anti-terrorism legislation; 38 via the criminal code; 14, under state security legislation; 14, military justice laws; and eight under Decree Law 81, or illegal entry into the country. Supreme Court president Luis Maldonado has said that military court judges make rulings affecting far more civilians than members of the armed forces. The Chilean Catholic Migration Institute (INCAMI), an affiliate of a Church agency created to assist in the return of migrants and exiles, says that 1.5 million Chileans are living in other countries, equivalent to over 12% of the population. About 800,000 settled in Argentina, and another 200,000 in other Latin American countries. Thousands are residing in Europe, including 26,000 in Sweden, and an estimated 5,000 in Belgium. About 28,000 Chileans settled in Australia. The vast majority of exiles are not expected to return to Chile. The Chilean Human Rights Commission estimates that 900,000 children and adolescents "the coup generation" have suffered physical or psychological damage as an outcome of human rights abuses perpetrated against relatives over the 1973-1988 period. (Basic data from Notimex, 09/09/89)

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