GUSTAVO GATICA, CHILE

BLINDED BY POLICE FOR DEMANDING DIGNITY AND EQUALITY
When protests broke out across Chile over rising prices and inequality, Gustavo Gatica was studying psychology in the capital, Santiago. Like millions of others, he, too, took to the streets.

Demonstrations lasted for weeks, capturing imaginations around the world. This was people power in action and it was awe-inspiring. The authorities, however, took a different view.

At one fateful protest in November, police loaded their shotguns with rubber-coated buckshot and fired into the gathered crowds. It was no different from other protests where hundreds were hurt and dozens suffered eye injuries almost every day. Those in charge didn’t stop the police. Instead, they allowed the violence to continue.

Gustavo was among the crowds that November. He was shot in both eyes and permanently blinded. The attack made global headlines.

An internal police investigation following the shooting found that no one could be held responsible. It even suggested that demonstrators themselves injured Gustavo. The National Prosecutor’s Office is now investigating. Still, those who allowed the attack on Gustavo remain unpunished.

“I gave my eyes so people would wake up,” says Gustavo. As demonstrations continued, protestors wore eye patches and chanted his name at police. They want justice. So do we.

Demand justice for Gustavo.