

Truth and Justice: Integral and indivisible in dealing with “disappearances”

The three elements of truth, justice, and reparation are key in dealing with the legacy of “disappearances”, Amnesty International said today after the signing of the declaration by the Chilean Human Rights Discussion table (*Mesa de Diálogo*). "Any measure that does not fulfill these requirements or any attempt to separate them is unacceptable."

The organization is now studying the text of the declaration, which was signed yesterday by representatives of the Chilean Armed Forces, Carabineros de Chile *, human rights lawyers and representatives of civil society.

Any measure adopted regarding “disappearances” must be totally transparent, with specific terms of reference to guarantee the credibility of the information gathered and the necessary supervision of investigations.

“An important step towards a solution for the human rights violations committed during the military government is the dismantling of the obstacles which have ensured impunity and hindered justice in Chile for two decades,” Amnesty International said. “The annulment of the 1978 Amnesty Law is one of those steps.”

Amnesty International expects that the independence of the judiciary will continue to be maintained in the search for justice for past human rights violations, which include -- as well as “disappearances” -- other crimes against humanity.

Background

The Human Rights Discussion Table was convened on 21 August 1999 by the former Minister of Defence Edmundo Pérez Yoma to discuss the legacy of human rights violations committed during the military government. The initiative has been criticised by some human rights groups, including relatives of the "disappeared", who have been sceptical of its outcome. Amnesty International has noted the developments of the Discussion Table, underlining that the adoption of any measures resulting in anything else than complete truth and justice would be insufficient and tardy.

According to information received by Amnesty International the Declaration registers *inter alia* the position that the Armed Forces and Carabineros have no information at present on the "disappeared". However, it establishes the commitment of the Armed Forces and Carabineros to make the greatest efforts possible to obtain information on the location of the remains of the "disappeared". The Declaration sets a time-table of six months from the approval of the new legislation for this task, including the delivery to the President of the Republic of all the information gathered.

* Carabineros de Chile -(uniformed police)

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Amnesty International public document - AI Index AMR 22/014/2000 - News Service Nr. 116

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