



## Pinochet and others Case

### Chile / France: Pinochet and others Case

3 December 2010

## A Historic Trial in France on International Crimes Committed under the Chilean Dictatorship

**FIDH and its affiliates in Chile and in France, Corporación de Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos del Pueblo (CODEPU) and Ligue des droits de l'Homme (LDH), welcome the opening of the proceedings against 14 former senior leaders of the dictatorship of General Pinochet, who are the alleged perpetrators of the disappearances of four French-Chilean citizens - Georges Klein, Étienne Pesle, Alfonso Chanfreau and Jean-Yves Claudet. The proceedings, which had initially been scheduled for May 2008, had been postponed once and are now finally taking place before the Cour d'Assises (Criminal Court) in Paris, the highest criminal jurisdiction in France, from December 8 to 17, 2010.**

FIDH, CODEPU and LDH, as well as the Association of former Chilean political prisoners in France and the Association France Latin America are civil parties alongside the families of the four Frenchmen in a trial that should result in the overall oppressive system of the dictatorship of General Pinochet (1973-1990) being denounced for the very first time.

The crimes of disappearance and torture which had been committed against the four victims who are at the centre of these proceedings reflect the extremely hierarchical system of command under this regime, and the major events that had happened under this dictatorship : the bombing of the Presidential Palace of La Moneda in which Salvador Allende committed suicide ; the systematic repression of opponents (including the activists of the revolutionary movement of the Left - MIR - and the actors of the agricultural reform launched by Allende in particular) ; the large-scale systematic torturing in torture centres, such as "London 38", "Villa Grimaldi" or the "Colonia Dignidad" ; and the "Condor Plan" which was aimed at eliminating any opponents to the dictatorships of the Region.

Among the 14 suspects who will be put on trial in Paris will be General Manuel Contreras, ex-leader of DINA (the first secret police of the military regime of Chile). Augusto Pinochet himself was also being pursued in this case, but he passed away on December 10, 2006, a few weeks before the order of indictment passed by the French investigating judge Sophie Clément. A further four suspects died before the opening of these proceedings.

*"These hearings will also enable several historic witnesses to be heard. Despite the death of General Pinochet, this trial will no less be a posthumous trial of the dictator, as well as the only one of the entire system of repression that was in place",* according to Maîtres William Bourdon, Sophie Thonon, Claude Katz and Benjamin Sarfati, lawyers to the victims and the civil parties.

*"The detention of General Pinochet in London in 1998 enabled the proceedings, which had been initiated by the victims of the Chilean dictatorship, to be re-launched in Chile and abroad. Because of the non-applicability of the*

statute of limitation to these crimes, this trial goes beyond borders and contributes to the global fight against impunity. It is now hoped that the truth that will come out of this trial will be extended to Chile and that it will help to confront the reality of these crimes at long last", commented Hiram Villagra and Federico Aguirre, lawyers of CODEPU in Chile.

## [Press conference on 6 December 2010 at 11am at the CAPE in Paris](#)

### FIDH-LDH-CODEPU Press kit on this case

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- [Dossier de presse FIDH-LDH-CODEPU: &ldquo;Le procès de la dictature de Pinochet&rdquo; - décembre 2010 \[Fr\]](#) [Dossier de prensa FIDH-LDH-CODEPU: &ldquo;El proceso de la dictadura de Pinochet&rdquo; - diciembre de 2010](#) [FIDH-LDH-CODEPU Press kit: &ldquo;The trial of the Pinochet dictatorship&rdquo; - December 2010 \[En\]](#) PDF

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&ndash; 792.6 kb

**For more information, please see the special &ldquo;dossier&rdquo; on the case, available on the FIDH website.**

<http://www.fidh.org/A-Historic-Trial-in-France-on-International>