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<http://www.rsf.org/chile-more-media-freedom-violations-18-10-2011,41233.html>

Americas - Chile

Feared police

More media freedom violations feared in protests called for today and tomorrow

18 October 2011

Reporters Without Borders shares the concern that the Chilean Union of Photographers and Cameramen has expressed about the possibility of more violence against media personnel by the security forces, especially the carabinero militarized police, during the large protests that are expected to take place today and tomorrow in response to calls from the student movement.

The concern is justified by [the many cases of abuses](#) by police and carabineros at previous demonstrations. Chile's carabineros are part of the armed forces.

In a statement sent to Reporters Without Borders, the union complains of the many deliberate attacks by police against photographers and cameramen, as well as arrests, during recent demonstrations. The statement cites the cases of three journalists in particular:

- **Rodrigo Cisternas**, a photographer for the daily *La Tercera*, who was targeted by riot police using a kind of water canon known in Chile as a "guanaco."
- *Chilevisión* cameraman **Luis Narvaez**, who was attacked by Special Forces and then detained for no clear reason.
- Photographer **Cristian Opazo**, who had tear-gas fired directly in his face.

The statement also mentioned the case of *EFE* photographer **Victor Salas**, who lost an eye after being hit repeatedly with a baton by a member of the carabinero police while covering a teachers demonstrations in Valparaíso in May 2008. The carabinero involved was never punished.

The carabineros do not like being filmed or photographed by media personnel or by students who provide their own coverage of the protests. History student Nicolás Salazar was attacked by carabineros after he filmed them attacking another student during a campus protest at the University of Concepción on 29 September.

The students involved filed a complaint about the use of violence. A complaint was also filed by the Chilean Correspondents' Association about *Inter Press Service* photographer **Fernando Fiedler**'s arbitrary detention and the seizure of his equipment after he photographed police violence on 6 October.

"We call for these abuses to be fully investigated and we urge the armed forces not to obstruct the enquiries," Reporters Without Borders said. "The Union of Photographers and Cameramen is right to point to the Victor Salas case as a shocking example of impunity.

"Gestures are needed to reassure all the journalists covering the demonstrations, regardless of the media they work for. One such gesture would be the immediate abandonment of [a controversial bill](#) that would have the effect of turning journalists into police informers."

Following last week's visit to Chile by UN special rapporteur for freedom of expression [Frank La Rue](#), UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Kyung-wha Kang is visiting Chile this week and is due to meet with student organizations and representatives of [the Mapuche indigenous community](#), whose media have also been harassed.

Reporters Without Borders hopes that she will help the Chilean authorities to hear and understand the widespread calls from the population for more consultation on major social issues and for media sector reforms.
