

The victims of the Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile (1973–1990): scale of repression, regime's methods, and historical background of crimes

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Abstract: This article presents a concise analysis of political repression and human rights violations in Chile during the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973–1990). The study is grounded in the findings of the Rettig Commission, the Valech Commission, and subsequent institutions responsible for the qualification of victims. According to the data cited in the article, the total number of recognized victims of the regime reached 40,175 individuals. These included victims of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and political prisoners subjected to torture. Repression assumed various forms: mass and selective arrests, extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, physical and psychological torture, sexual violence, deportations, and long-term administrative control. Security apparatuses played a crucial role—most notably the DINA and its successor, the CNI—operating in cooperation with the armed forces, Carabineros, and other intelligence agencies. The analysis also accounts for the Cold War context and growing political polarization, while emphasizing that acts of violence committed by certain opposition organizations cannot obscure state responsibility for systemic repression. Furthermore, the article highlights the transnational nature of select state operations and underscores the importance of truth commissions in documenting crimes, restoring the identity of victims, and constructing historical memory.

Keywords: Chile, Augusto Pinochet, military dictatorship, political repression, torture, desaparecidos, Rettig Commission, Valech Commission, DINA, CNI.

1. INTRODUCTION

The military dictatorship in Chile lasted from the coup d'état of September 11, 1973, until the restoration of civilian rule in 1990¹. This period became one of the most prominent examples of systemic state terror in Latin America during the second half of the 20th century². The objective of the repression was not only the physical elimination of individuals deemed opponents, but also the dissolution of political and social structures, the intimidation of families, and the creation of a deterrent effect across society as a whole³. The nature of the repression evolved alongside the political situation: the initial phase was characterized by mass detentions and executions, followed by more selective operations carried out by intelligence services, while in the 1980s, repression increasingly focused on suppressing public protests and countering organizations engaged in armed resistance⁴.

Knowledge regarding the scale of these actions expanded significantly following the end of the dictatorship⁵. The Rettig Commission primarily investigated cases of death and enforced disappearances, whereas the Valech Commission focused on political imprisonment and torture. Subsequent institutions further complemented their findings. Consequently, it became possible to move beyond isolated, often fragmented testimonies toward a comprehensive

¹ Ensalaco, 2000, p. 45.

² Ibidem.

³ Collins, 2010, p. 12.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Stern, 2006, pp. 88–90.

picture of repression as a phenomenon encompassing a significant portion of the country and involving numerous state institutions⁶.

2. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND:

The roots of the crisis are to be found in the processes preceding the coup d'état⁷. From the 1950s onward, Chile was increasingly influenced by the Cold War, and following the Cuban Revolution of 1959, political conflict in Latin America acquired an additional ideological dimension. In Chile, democratic principles remained the foundation of public life; however, polarization intensified during the 1960s and early 1970s.⁸ While a faction of the left viewed armed struggle as a viable path to power, elements of the right were progressively leaning toward forceful solutions. This did not, however, imply homogeneity on either side. Within the Popular Unity (Unidad Popular) coalition, there were groups that rejected violence, and President Salvador Allende advocated for a democratic "Chilean road to socialism."⁹

A distinct role was played by the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), which drew upon revolutionary ideology and operated underground¹⁰. Similarly, a wing of the Socialist Party adopted a more confrontational stance, although its activities had for decades been tied to democratic politics. On the right, by contrast, certain circles openly supported a military intervention. Escalating political violence, an institutional crisis, and disagreements over the future model of the state created conditions in which the coup d'état could be framed as a means to restore order¹¹.

While this context is essential for understanding the junta's subsequent narrative, it cannot serve as a justification for systemic human rights violations¹². Findings from truth commissions indicate that repression was not limited to individuals engaged in armed activity. Among the victims were also civil servants, workers, students, community activists, members of previously legal political parties, individuals suspected of leftist sympathies, and occasionally people with no active political involvement¹³.

3. SCALE OF REPRESSION AND MAIN CATEGORIES OF VICTIMS:

The primary outcome of the commissions' work was the documentation of the full scale of repression¹⁴. Based on the data cited in the article, the total number of recognized victims of the military regime between 1973 and 1990 stands at 40,175 individuals¹⁵. This figure encompasses persons murdered for political reasons, victims of enforced disappearance, and individuals officially recognized as political prisoners who were subjected to torture. These figures do not represent a simple tally of all acts of violence, but rather the result of formal qualification processes grounded in testimonies, documentation, and other evidentiary materials¹⁶.

The Valech Commission gathered testimony from more than 35,000 individuals who experienced political imprisonment or torture¹⁷. Among the 28,459 individuals whose testimonies were included in the cited statistics, 94% reported having been tortured during their detention. The data also reveal a distinct demographic profile among the victims: 44.2% of respondents were between 21 and 30 years old at the time of arrest, and a further 25.4% were aged 31 to 40. Men constituted 87.5% of respondents, and women 12.5%. ¹⁸The socio-political profile was equally notable: a significant proportion comprised skilled and unskilled workers, professionals, technicians, and students, while among those declaring political affiliations, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party were particularly prominent¹⁹.

Repression was not confined to adults²⁰. The Valech Commission identified 1,080 cases involving minors, with over 60% of child detentions occurring between September and December 1973²¹. The initial phase of the dictatorship was especially intense: 67.4% of the testimonies qualified by the Valech Commission pertained

⁶ Ibidem; Kornbluh, 2013, p. 23

⁷ Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, 1993, p.64.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 65.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 66.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 67.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 68-69.

¹² Wright & Oñate, 1998, p. 24.

¹³ Winn, 2004, p. 14-18

¹⁴ Kornbluh, 2013, p. 23.

¹⁵ La Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura, 2004, p. 227-229.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 562-570.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 231-233.

²¹ Ibidem.

to detentions carried out between September and December 1973²². In subsequent periods, the widespread nature of the repression diminished, giving way to more selective operations²³.

4. DESAPARECIDOS AND POLITICAL EXECUTIONS:

Enforced disappearances constituted one of the most defining forms of state violence²⁴. The term *desaparecido* refers to an individual detained by state agents, or persons acting on their behalf, who subsequently vanished from the official legal system²⁵. Authorities frequently denied the very fact of detention, claimed the individual had been released, or offered implausible explanations regarding their fate. This mechanism impacted not only the victims themselves, but also inflicted prolonged psychological distress on their families, who remained in a state of uncertainty for years²⁶. Young men predominated among the disappeared²⁷. In one compilation cited in the article, 93.79% of victims were male, and 74.41% were under the age of 35. Manual laborers, agricultural workers, students, and individuals affiliated with the MIR, the Communist Party, and the Socialist Party accounted for a substantial proportion of this group. The vast majority of enforced disappearances occurred between 1973 and 1977, with a peak intensity recorded in the final months of 1973²⁸.

Cases detailed in the primary sources demonstrate a recurring pattern: arrest at home or in the workplace, transfer to a police station or military facility, interrogation, torture, and a complete cessation of information regarding the detainee's fate.²⁹ In the cases of Luis Bernardo Acevedo Andrade, Víctor Jerez Meza, and Luis Rolando Tapia Concha, testimonies indicate the involvement of police, military, or intelligence services, coupled with a total absence of reliable information provided to their families. Disappearance served not merely as the outcome of violence, but as a deliberate method to conceal it³⁰.

The Rettig Commission also documented numerous political killings³¹. Among the 1,068 individuals whose deaths were attributed to state agents or persons acting in their service were victims of military tribunal sentences, protest-related violence, alleged escape attempts, extrajudicial executions, and deaths resulting from torture. The commission also investigated killings committed by private individuals for political motives, as well as acts of political violence that fell outside the narrower category of direct state responsibility³².

Extrajudicial executions held particular significance³³. One common justification employed by the authorities was the so-called "law of flight" (*ley de fuga*), under which victims were claimed to have been shot while attempting to escape. However, the Rettig Commission determined that the official explanations in the cases examined lacked credibility and classified them as extrajudicial executions. The commission further documented killings involving excessive force, executions carried out in the presence of families, and instances where death was accompanied by extreme cruelty and torture³⁴.

5. ARRESTS, DETENTION CENTERS, AND TORTURE:

The repressive system relied on an extensive detention network³⁵. Arrests were carried out in homes, workplaces, streets, factories, mining areas, and impoverished neighborhoods. In rural areas, roundups (*redadas*) were frequently conducted. Police patrols, the armed forces, investigative police, and intelligence services were responsible for detentions³⁶. Detainees were taken to military bases, police stations, prisons, garrisons, educational and sports facilities, as well as specialized secret detention centers. The National Stadium (*Estadio Nacional*) and the Chile Stadium (*Estadio Chile*) became prominent symbols of this initial phase of repression³⁷.

²² Ibidem, p. 581.

²³ Ibidem.

²⁴ Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, 1991, p. 51.

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 52.

²⁷ Garcia Castro, 2013, p. 31.

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ Ibidem, p.31-32.

³⁰ Memoria Viva, 2023

³¹ Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, 1993, p. 1122

³² Ibidem.

³³ Ibidem, p. 163–167.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 155–156.

³⁶ Ibidem.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 157-158

Conditions varied according to the location and time period³⁸. In the first few months, many facilities were improvised and ill-equipped to hold large numbers of people. Prisoners slept on floors, had severely restricted access to food and sanitation facilities, and were completely cut off from the outside world. Families were frequently unaware of the whereabouts of their loved ones, and attempts to obtain information could result in threats or further detentions³⁹. Over time, conditions improved in certain camps, where prisoners were permitted contact with their families and allowed to organize cultural or medical activities. However, this did not alter the inherently repressive nature of the system⁴⁰.

Torture constituted one of the primary tools of interrogation and control⁴¹. While the Rettig Commission highlighted the widespread occurrence of beatings and humiliation, the Valech Commission documented the systematic use of physical violence, electric shocks, burns, suspension, sleep deprivation, isolation, starvation, mock executions, and sexual violence. Torture served not merely to extract information; its function was also to punish, break resistance, coerce confessions, and intimidate fellow detainees. In certain instances, victims were returned to communal detention areas following torture so that others could witness the physical impact of the violence⁴².

The systematic nature of these practices is corroborated by the findings of the Valech Commission⁴³. Among the individuals whose testimonies were accepted, 94% reported experiencing torture. During the initial years, the repression was marked by extreme brutality, whereas in subsequent periods, methods of violence became more specialized. Physical torture was systematically combined with psychological abuse: death threats, forced observation of the suffering of others, uncertainty regarding the fate of family members, and continuous transfer between detention facilities⁴⁴.

The organizational structure of the repression likewise evolved over time⁴⁵. In the autumn of 1973, mass detentions conducted by various branches of the security forces predominated. Between 1974 and 1977, the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) assumed an increasingly central role, shifting operations toward selective detentions targeting individuals perceived as key figures in rebuilding the underground opposition. From 1978 onward, the National Information Center (CNI) assumed a major role. In the 1980s, arrests rose once again in response to widespread social protests and the activities of armed opposition groups⁴⁶.

6. LAW, INSTITUTIONS, AND STATE RESPONSIBILITY:

Repression was not merely the result of uncontrolled actions by individual officers⁴⁷. The Valech Commission pointed to the use of extraordinary powers, decrees, and administrative decisions to deprive individuals of their liberty. Arrests could be ordered by military prosecutors or carried out by government-controlled security agencies. The authorities also created categories of offenses linked to political affiliation or the expression of specific views⁴⁸.

It is significant to note that torture was already prohibited under Chilean law prior to the coup d'état⁴⁹. The Penal Code of 1876 provided for criminal liability for the use of torture and unnecessary rigor, while the Code of Military Justice 1926 specified liability for severe abuses against prisoners. Despite these existing norms, the practice of repression was facilitated by states of exception, the restriction of judicial oversight, and the actions of institutions that tolerated or supported the security services. The Valech Commission determined that torture and illegal detentions were utilized as instruments of political control⁵⁰.

The distinction between state responsibility and the broader concept of political violence was also of crucial importance. The National Corporation for Reparation and Reconciliation analyzed cases qualified by the Rettig Commission and separated victims of human rights violations from victims of political violence⁵¹. These categories were not entirely rigid, as perpetrator motivations, their status, and institutional responses varied. Nevertheless, this distinction allowed for precision in attributing legal and institutional responsibility⁵².

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 158-159.

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 160.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ Ibidem, s. 159-167.

⁴² Ibidem.

⁴³ La Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura, 2004, p. 229.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 229, 562-570.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 240-264.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 227-229.

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁹ Collins, 2010, p. 45-47.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ La Corporación Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, 1996, p. 28-29.

⁵² Ibidem.

7. TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION AND OPPOSITION VIOLENCE:

Repression did not end at Chile's borders⁵³. Primary sources describe cases of disappeared and killed Chileans in Argentina, including situations in which the Rettig Commission found grounds to attribute involvement to agents of the Chilean government. These operations aligned with broader intelligence cooperation among southern cone regimes associated with Operation Condor. This network enabled the tracking, detention, and elimination of political opponents outside their home countries⁵⁴.

At the same time, an analysis should not overlook the violence perpetrated by certain opposition organizations⁵⁵. From around 1980 onward, the MIR, and later the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (FPMR) alongside other groups, engaged in armed activities, including attacks, assassinations of officials, and acts of terrorism. The Rettig Commission documented human rights violations committed by the MIR, and subsequently by the FPMR and other groups. Police officers and military personnel were among the victims⁵⁶.

While opposition violence was a real element of the conflict, it does not negate state responsibility for its own actions⁵⁷. The fundamental distinction lay in the nature of the repressive apparatus: the state possessed security institutions, prisons, coercive power, legislation, and the authority to act under states of exception. Findings from truth commissions demonstrate that systemic torture, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial executions were intrinsically linked to the functioning of these structures, rather than mere individual abuses of power⁵⁸.

An important addition to this picture is the involvement of civilians who supported the repressive apparatus⁵⁹. Certain landowners, vendors, drivers, and other residents identified individuals deemed "troublesome" by the authorities, provided vehicles or locations for interrogations, and in some instances participated in arrests and executions. This reveals that state terror was able to function through the collaboration of segments of society with the state apparatus, though this does not imply collective responsibility on the part of the general population⁶⁰.

8. TRUTH COMMISSIONS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MEMORY:

Following the end of the dictatorship, establishing historical facts became a primary challenge⁶¹. The Rettig Commission focused on deaths and enforced disappearances, whereas the Valech Commission gathered tens of thousands of testimonies concerning political imprisonment and torture. Subsequent commissions and institutions expanded the number of recognized cases and systematically cataloged information regarding victims and detention sites. Ultimately, the Valech Commission identified approximately 800 detention and torture facilities throughout Chile⁶².

The significance of these efforts extends far beyond statistics⁶³. Enforced disappearance deprived families of the possibility of learning the fate of their loved ones; torture shattered not only the physical body, but also social relationships and the sense of security; and the concealment of remains hindered the grieving process while perpetuating uncertainty. The documentation of testimonies was thus a process of restoring identity to the victims and securing their place in history. Furthermore, truth commissions served as the foundation for subsequent reparation policies and the ongoing debate surrounding perpetrator accountability⁶⁴.

9. EVOLUTION OF REPRESSION OVER TIME:

The chronology of the repression demonstrates that the system was not static⁶⁵. Immediately following the coup, mass operations aimed at securing control over institutions, cities, and towns predominated. Officials of the deposed government, local activists, individuals suspected of ties to the left, and persons identified as "agitators" were detained. Arrests were frequently carried out without prior judicial proceedings. During the initial months, military facilities, police stations, stadiums, and improvised camps were utilized, with a segment of detainees being brought before military tribunals⁶⁶.

⁵³ McSherry, 2005, p. 102, 107–109.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, Dinges, 2004, p. 112.

⁵⁵ Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, 1993, pp. 812–921.

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

⁵⁷ Collins, 2010, pp. 45–47; McSherry, 2005, pp. 107–109.

⁵⁸ Ibidem.

⁵⁹ Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, 1993, p. 162

⁶⁰ Ibidem.

⁶¹ La Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura, 2004, p. 7.

⁶² Ibidem, p.227-228.

⁶³ La Comisión Presidencial Asesora..., 2010, p. 51–52; Memoria, 2023

⁶⁴ Ibidem.

⁶⁵ Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, 1993, p. 155–156

⁶⁶ Ibidem.

Between 1974 and 1977, a shift occurred from mass repression to selective operations⁶⁷. The National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) gained particular prominence, focusing on individuals deemed key to the reconstruction of the underground structures of the MIR, the Socialist Party, and the Communist Party. Arrests increasingly assumed an targeted nature: operatives were informed of the addresses, workplaces, routines, and contacts of sought individuals. Detention often resulted in short-term confinement in secret centers, interrogation, torture, forced signing of confessions, and subsequently imprisonment, deportation, or enforced disappearance⁶⁸.

After 1978, the repressive apparatus underwent partial reorganization⁶⁹. DINA was replaced by the CNI, though repression continued to involve the Carabineros, investigative police, and other intelligence agencies. In the 1980s, widespread social protests and the activities of armed groups became defining factors. The state responded both with repression directed at participants in public mobilizations and with targeted operations against the MIR, FPMR, and other organizations. This marked a shift in operational methods rather than the termination of the system of control⁷⁰.

10. SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES:

Repression impacted society far beyond those who were directly detained⁷¹. The families of the *desaparecidos* were left without certainty as to whether their loved ones were alive. Relatives of prisoners faced intimidation, and individuals released from custody could remain subject to administrative oversight, travel bans restricting movement from their place of residence, or requirements to report regularly to authorities. Some were deported, while others were denied the right to return to Chile. In this manner, repression often persisted well after the formal termination of detention⁷².

A crucial mechanism of control was its interference with professional life⁷³. DINA routinely passed information regarding the political sympathies of released detainees to employers, which frequently resulted in job loss and exacerbated economic hardship. Repression thus possessed material, social, and psychological dimensions. Its objective extended beyond the extraction of information during interrogation to include the systematic disruption of independent social networks⁷⁴.

The experiences of women and minors were particularly significant⁷⁵. While data from the Valech Commission indicate that women constituted a minority of respondents, their testimonies document sexual violence and the exploitation of familial bonds as instruments of coercion. Victims also included children and adolescents, with a portion of detentions taking place in the presence of parents or other family members. Violence directed at an individual was thus transformed into a broader signal targeted at the entire family and local community⁷⁶.

Equally critical was the deliberate destruction and concealment of information⁷⁷. Authorities routinely obscured the location of detainees, destroyed documentation, or provided contradictory information to families. In cases of extrajudicial killings, false explanations regarding the circumstances of death were sometimes offered, and bodies were hidden, relocated, or withheld without providing full details to relatives. The concealment of evidence was an integral component of the repressive mechanism, serving not only to impede the pursuit of justice, but to hinder the basic establishment of historical facts⁷⁸.

11. INTERPRETIVE CONCLUSIONS:

An analysis of combined data regarding homicides, enforced disappearances, detentions, and torture reveals three fundamental features of the system⁷⁹. First, the repression exhibited a politically selective nature: it disproportionately targeted individuals associated with the left, social movements, trade unions, and the structures of the ousted government. Second, it was organized across multiple institutions, which enabled information sharing, the transfer

⁶⁷ La Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura, 2004, p. 240–250.

⁶⁸ Ibidem.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, p. 246-264.

⁷⁰ Ibidem.

⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 261-263.

⁷² Ibidem.

⁷³ Winn, 2004, p. 28.

⁷⁴ Ibidem,

⁷⁵ La Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura, 2004, p. 562–570.

⁷⁶ Ibidem.

⁷⁷ Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, 1993, p. 166–167

⁷⁸ Ibidem.

⁷⁹ La Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura, 2004, p. 227–229

of detainees, and the maintenance of an extensive network of detention centers. Third, violence was intertwined with administrative and legal measures that constrained judicial oversight⁸⁰.

At the same time, the source material demonstrates that the experience of repression was not uniform across Chile⁸¹. Depending on the region, timeframe, and status of the victim, distinct procedures were applied. Some prisoners were sent to camps where family contact and cultural activities were eventually permitted; others were held in clandestine centers where torture and isolation formed the core of daily operations. While certain detainees were formally tried, others disappeared without a trace. This heterogeneity does not contradict the systemic nature of the repression; rather, it underscores its flexibility and capacity to adapt methods to shifting circumstances⁸².

A major consequence of this organizational structure was the creation of a climate of pervasive uncertainty⁸³. An individual could be detained at home, in the workplace, or on the street, while their family received no reliable information regarding the legal basis of the arrest. Release from custody similarly did not signal a complete return to normalcy. Mandatory check-ins, monitoring of residence, job loss, and forced exile meant that state pressure often persisted long after physical detention had ended⁸⁴.

In this sense, the repression must be understood both as a collection of specific crimes and as a mechanism for restructuring the social space⁸⁵. Eliminating leaders, dismantling organizations, intimidating families, and monitoring former prisoners curtailed society's capacity for self-organization. Today, the documentation of truth commissions allows for the reconstruction of this mechanism—not merely through casualty counts, but through the analysis of how detentions, torture, disappearances, and administrative controls operated as mutually reinforcing elements⁸⁶.

12. METHODOLOGY AND THE NATURE OF SOURCES:

This synthetic reconstruction relies primarily on the materials cited in the original study. The foundational basis comprises the reports of the Rettig and Valech Commissions, as they integrate institutional documentation with firsthand accounts from victims of repression. These are complemented by historical literature and scholarly analyses regarding accountability, memory, and Operation Condor. Such a synthesis makes it possible to combine quantitative data with a structural description of the security apparatus's operating mechanisms.

However, methodological caution is required when comparing statistical data⁸⁷. The commissions applied differing criteria to qualify victims, and subsequent bodies expanded upon earlier compilations. Consequently, the figure of 40,175 individuals should be understood as the result of later official recognition of qualified victims, rather than an exhaustive count of all persons who may have experienced repression. Furthermore, the categories of "victim of human rights violations" and "victim of political violence" were not always mutually exclusive⁸⁸.

From the perspective of historical analysis, victim testimonies are of paramount importance. They allow for the reconstruction of the actual practices of detention, interrogation, and torture, which cannot be fully captured by statistics alone. Simultaneously, the commission reports demonstrate that individual experiences were replicated across numerous regions and facilities, thereby reinforcing the conclusion regarding the systemic nature of the repression.

It is worth emphasizing that the findings of truth commissions also hold significant methodological value. They show that analyzing political violence requires the simultaneous consideration of scale, institutional frameworks, timeline, victim profiles, and local conditions. Only by integrating these variables can one discern the difference between isolated abuses and the operation of a repressive apparatus as an integrated system.

From the standpoint of historical memory, maintaining a clear distinction between documentation and interpretation remains crucial. Numerical data illustrates the magnitude of the phenomenon, whereas testimonies articulate its human dimension. Both perspectives are indispensable to ensure that the history of repression is reduced neither to abstract statistics nor to isolated incidents detached from their broader structural context.

⁸⁰ Ibidem.

⁸¹ La Corporación Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación, 1996, p. 28–29

⁸² Ibidem.

⁸³ Stern, 2006, p. 67–90.

⁸⁴ Ibidem.

⁸⁵ Collins, 2010, p. 45–47

⁸⁶ Ibidem.

⁸⁷ Ibidem.

⁸⁸ Ibidem.

13. SUMMARY:

Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship established a system of repression in Chile whose scale and organization far transcended isolated acts of violence⁸⁹. The total figure of 40,175 recognized victims, thousands of testimonies recorded by the Rettig and Valech Commissions, and the identification of hundreds of detention sites point to the sustained and multi-institutional character of the state violence. The state apparatus deployed arrests, imprisonment, torture, extrajudicial executions, and enforced disappearances as systematic instruments of political neutralization and social control⁹⁰.

While the Cold War context, political polarization, and the violent actions of certain opposition groups are essential for understanding the dynamics of the conflict, they cannot serve as a justification for systemic human rights violations⁹¹. Of particular significance is the fact that repression extended to individuals not involved in armed struggle, and the use of torture and unlawful detention was demonstrably routinized. The state-driven nature of this violence is evidenced by the direct involvement of the DINA, CNI, the armed forces, Carabineros, and other security structures⁹².

The memory of the victims remains an integral component of the dictatorship's accountability process. Restoring the identity of the *desaparecidos*, documenting the fates of the murdered, and giving voice to torture survivors represented not only an effort to establish historical truth, but also laid the foundation for rebuilding societal responsibility for the protection of human rights. The truth commissions demonstrated that documenting testimonies can transform the experience of violence from a silenced tragedy into a rigorously recorded chapter of national history.

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⁸⁹ Kornbluh, 2013, p. 24

⁹⁰ Ibidem.

⁹¹ Dinges, 2004, p. 112; McSherry, 2005, p. 107–109; Collins, 2010, p. 45–47

⁹² Ibidem.