

# Open letter to Foreign Secretary: Chileans in the UK make urgent plea to take actions against serious human rights violations by State agents in Chile

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To: fcocorrespondence@fco.gov.uk <fcocorrespondence@fco.gov.uk>

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21 Jan 2020 - *In an open letter, Chilean citizens in the UK, with different political views, make an urgent plea to the UK Government to take actions to help protect human rights and democracy in Chile. We hope you can support the urgent call to respect Human Rights in Chile, so lives can be saved and crimes occurred could be brought to Justice.*

Thank you,

(On behalf of the signing organisations)

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London, 21st of January, 2020

King Charles Street  
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UK Foreign Office

Dear Rt. Hon. Dominic Raab, UK Foreign Secretary,

Subject: Chilean students and citizens living in the UK make an urgent plea for the British Government to take action and help prevent further human rights violations by State agents in Chile

The signing organisations of Chilean students and citizens living in the UK, in representation of our members, which are people of different political views, but united in the protection of human rights and democracy, would like in this open letter to call the attention of the UK Foreign Office and Government to the recent, verified international reports from the United Nations Human Rights Office (UNHRO), Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) -amongst others- confirming the evidence of serious human rights violations, including torture and sexual violence, against legitimate democratic protestors and civilians by State agents in Chile (see references 4-7, 9). Also, at the light of these concerning reports, in this letter we would like to make an urgent plea for the Foreign Office and UK Government to publicly announce the following immediate actions, in order to help to prevent further human rights violations by Stage agents in Chile, and to confirm the UK's long-standing and global-leading commitment to defend democracy and human rights across the world:

1) *Stop export licences of crowd-control equipment to Chile.*

As recently done by the Foreign Office in the case of Hong Kong, publicly announce stopping export licences of crowd-control equipment to avoid the use of UK made or exported equipment in violent repression against legitimate democratic protests in Chile.

*2) Investigate if cases of serious human rights violations by Chilean State agents continue in the future, to assess if further diplomatic measures are required.*

As also announced in response to the situation in Hong Kong, to investigate if violent repression against legitimate democratic protest, arbitrary detentions, torture, deaths, or any serious human right violations by Chilean State agents continue in the future, in order to assess if it would be required to temporarily cease further relationships or agreements with Chile to observe the international treaties and conventions signed by the UK.

Considering the urgency and gravity of the human rights violations here referenced, we anticipate that the UK Foreign Office and Government will show their commitment and leadership for democracy and human rights, and then, will publicly respond to this open letter as soon as possible.

The UK has a long-standing and hugely influential role in upholding human rights and democratic values around the world. By publicly condemning these serious human rights violations and taking appropriate actions, the UK will help prevent further violations in Chile and send a positive message about its values at a critical time. Equally, it has a duty to do so under various international treaties, conventions and bilateral agreements it has signed.

We hope that the British government will take appropriate action in light of these events, and will use this opportunity for confirming to the Chilean, UK and international community its strong commitment and global leadership for defending democracy and human rights and for honouring international treaties, conventions and agreements.

We look forward to receiving your response to our urgent plea in this open letter. Moreover, we are at your disposal for meeting in person, should you wish to hear from the community directly.

Yours sincerely,

Organisations from UK universities:

Chilean Society, University of Oxford  
Chilean Society, University of Edinburgh  
Chilean Society, King's College London  
Chilean Society, London School of Economics  
Chilean Society, Goldsmiths University of London  
Chilean Society, University College London

Organisations of Chilean students and residents in the UK:

Assembly Chileans in Bristol  
Chilean community in Glasgow  
Assembly of Chileans in Manchester  
Assembly Chileans in London  
Chilean Solidarity Network (UK)

Notes:

A) Please reply to the sender of the email, who will distribute the response to other signing organisations.

B) Copies of this open letter were sent to the All-Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group, the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Minister of State (Minister for Europe and the Americas), and, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Chile.

## REFERENCES

- 1) Reuters, London. June 2019. 'Britain bans sales of tear gas to Hong Kong after violence at protests'. Link: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hongkong-extradition-britain/britain-bans-sales-of-tear-gas-to-hong-kong-after-violence-at-protests-idUSKCN1TQ1AL>
- 2) Financial Times. January 2020. 'UK to begin cracking of human rights abusers'. Link: <https://www.ft.com/content/38cd4b7e-32fd-11ea-a329-0bcf87a328f2>
- 3) Reuters, Manchester. September 2019. 'Britain to introduce a Magnitsky law after Brexit – Raab'. Link: <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-raab-idUKKBN1WE0JE>
- 4) Report of the United Nations Human Rights Office (UNHRO) Special Mission to Chile 30/Oct-22/Nov, 2019. Summary: The special mission to Chile found evidence of high number of serious human rights violations, including violation of international norms and standards in the use of force against civilians, arbitrary deprivation of life, injuries, cases of torture and ill-treatment, rape and sexual violence, blocking access to health services, and unlawful and arbitrary detentions by State agents. Some specially protected victims were also reported: children, women, human rights defenders and journalists, health workers and volunteer groups, amongst others. Link: [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CL/Report\\_Chile\\_2019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/CL/Report_Chile_2019_EN.pdf)
- 5) Amnesty International (AI). 'Chile: Deliberate policy to injure protesters points to responsibility of those in command'. Link: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/11/chile-responsable-politica-deliberada-para-danar-manifestantes/>
- 6) Amnesty International (AI). 'Chile: Amnesty International denounces human rights violations to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights'. Link: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/11/chile-amnistia-internacional-denunciara-violaciones-ante-cidh/>
- 7) Human Rights Watch (HRW). 'Chile: Police Reforms Needed in the Wake of Protests: Excessive Force Against Demonstrators, Bystanders; Serious Abuse in Detention.' Link: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/11/26/chile-police-reforms-needed-wake-protests>
- 8) UK Ministry of Justice, May 2018. 'Universal jurisdiction information note'. Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-jurisdiction-information-no>
- 9) INDH\* (National Human Rights Institute - Chile. \*: the main, highly trusted source for international human rights organisations), 15/Jan/2020, Report of Human Right Violations in Chile since Oct/18/2019 (Original in Spanish). Summary: In the tables below it is shown (unofficial translation) the most updated numbers of human rights violations in Chile and the related legal actions presented. Link (in Spanish): <https://twitter.com/inddhh/status/1218303446845140994?s=20>

Legal Actions presented (18/10/2019 to 15/01/2020)

<b>Total legal actions presented</b>	<b>1.080</b>
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Murder	5
Attempted murder	17
Sexual violence (rape and others)	158
Torture* and ill-treatment (*: see ref 8)	770
Injuries	21
Excessive use of force	81
<b>Total victims (all legal actions presented)</b>	<b>1.354</b>
Women	285
Men	840
Under 18 years old (Minors)	229
LGTBIQ+ Individuals	10
Migrants	5
Protected Native and Tribal groups	3

Reports from Chilean Police Detention centres (18/10/2019 to 15/01/2020)

<b>People in Police Detention centres visited by Human Rights observers</b>	<b>9.129</b>
Children (under 18 years of age)	1.067
<b>Total Human Rights violations reported</b>	<b>1.445</b>
Sexual violence	191
Torture and ill-treatment* (*: see ref 8)	412
Excessive use of force	842

Protests-repression Injuries registered by Health Services (18/10/2019 to 15/01/2020)

<b>Total people injured</b>	<b>3.649</b>
Men	2.954
Women	426
Children (under 18 years of age)	269
<b>Ocular injuries</b>	<b>405</b>
Injury or trauma	372
Blast eye injury or eye loss	33
<b>Firearm injuries</b>	<b>2.063</b>
Bullet	51
Rubber bullets	188
Pellets	1.624

Unidentified weapon	200
Tear-gas projectile impact	253