

28 July 2020

Chile: Offices of Londres 38 vandalised

On 24 July 2020, unknown individuals vandalised the premises of the center of historical memory, **Londres 38**, in Santiago. The graffiti included offensive messages in support of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship as well as the symbol of a far-right organisation. This is the latest in a series of attacks against the historical memory space in the past 10 months.

[Londres 38](#) is a center of historical memory and a private law corporation, founded in 2005 as a Functional Community Organization (OCF). During the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, the space was used as a detention and torture center by the dictatorship. Today, Londres 38 works to promote truth, justice, spaces for dialogue, further investigation into the history of the dictatorship, and denounces human rights violations.

On 24 July 2020, unknown individuals vandalized the outer walls of the premises of Londres 38. The graffiti included offensive messages of support for Pinochet's dictatorship, such as 'Viva Pinochet', as well as the symbol of the far-right organisation, Patria y Libertad. The graffiti also included a message in which 'extermination' was crossed out from 'extermination centre' and replaced with 'education', in an attempt to deny the killings and human rights violations perpetrated by members of the dictatorship when the building was used as a detention and torture center. The vandals also crossed out a sentence of a testament by a parent whose son had been tortured in the building, which was part of a display hanging outside.

The vandalism occurred during the national curfew, a measure implemented by the Chilean Government since late March in the context of COVID-19. Londres 38 released a [public statement](#) following the attack, stating that its members were assured that the act of aggression was in reprisal for the organisation's campaign denouncing the granting of social welfare benefits to persons currently serving sentences on charges of 'crimes against humanity'.

On 26 July 2020, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights [condemned](#) the attack on Twitter. During the Commission's last visit to Chile in February 2020, IACHR [expressed its concern](#) regarding the number of attacks on memorial sites in various regions of Chile, urging the state to investigate these attacks, as well as adopt measures to ensure the preservation of these memorial spaces.

In the past 10 months, Londres 38 has been targeted on a number of occasions by unknown individuals. On 18 October 2019, a poster promoting justice and truth was stolen from outside the organization's building, where it was hanging. A little over a week later, on 27 October, Londres 28 was subject to an arson attack on its building. Both incidents occurred during the social unrest in the country, to which the Government responded by deploying the military, which restricted freedom of movement and association in many cities in Chile for a number of days. Both attacks against Londres 38 were reported to the corresponding authorities. However, to date, neither the judicial or security bodies have notified Londres 38 of their intention to investigate the systematic attacks against the organisation.

In April 2020, a poster for International Women's Day was removed from the Londres 38 building by members of the right-wing organisation "Revolutionary Capitalism", who claimed responsibility for the robbery on 29 April in a video online, which has since been removed.

Memorial sites in the Southern Cone in South America are not only significant for what they represent, the basis for social transformation, but also in the case of Chile, for their importance as a source of evidence in ongoing trials against those implicated in the dictatorship. Such systematic

attacks against memorial sites and spaces, such as those against Londres 38, highlight the need for the implementation of a comprehensive policy on collective, historical memory in order to guarantee state protection and respect and autonomy for organisations promoting historical reconciliation and justice.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned by the series of systematic attacks against Londres 38. It believes they constitute a concerted effort to retaliate against the organisation for its legitimate efforts to promote truth and justice for the serious human rights violations committed during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile.

Front Line Defenders urges the Chilean authorities to:

1. Acknowledge the important and legitimate role of memory sites in Chile in accordance with the principles on Public Memory Policies in the Americas decreed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 3/2019;
2. Carry out an immediate, transparent, exhaustive and impartial investigation into the systematic attacks against Londres 38, with a view of publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice, in accordance with international standards;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Chile, particularly human rights defenders promoting truth and justice and carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisal and free of any restrictions.

Front Line Defenders Board of Directors

Denis O'Brien, Mary Lawlor, Jim Conway, Maria Mulcahy, Kieran Mulvey, Mary Jane Real (Philippines), David Sykes, Arnold Tsunga (Zimbabwe), Verónica Vidal (Uruguay)

Front Line Defenders International Advisory Council

James L. Cavallaro, Maryam Elahi, Michel Forst, Hina Jilani

Front Line, The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders trading as Front Line Defenders, is registered in Ireland as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. Registered Office: Second Floor, Grattan House, Temple Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, A94 FA39, Ireland.

Company No. 593190; Registered Charity No. 20204494; CHY 22404