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Chile: Who are the cowards who kill unarmed people

One of Norma's Popular Initiatives, that of Captain (R) Juan Painecura, gives a detailed description of 23 massacres perpetrated against civilians by the Chilean Army.



As in a drunken fight, General Cuellar challenges his 'opponents': "Sale pa' juera poh, sale pa' juera". Pa' juera, that is, there where he has four friends waiting. This behavior of a general of the Republic - milico in occupied territory - is painful and regrettable. High officialdom is not much different from neighborhood thugs. A note by journalist Alejandro Kirk.

The already famous alley challenge formulated by Chilean General Luis Felipe Cuellar, military chief of the state of emergency in Wallmapu (Araucanía), to the alleged armed

groups operating in the area was shot in the foot: "... here are cowardly people who kill unarmed civilians. Why don't you confront us?" he invited.

The incitement to confrontation – and the announcement that the Army was going to kill people – was massively condemned, including the National Institute of Human Rights (INDH), whose director, Sergio Micco, is not characterized by his assertiveness on the issue.

Rather, the offer to fall to bullets with an infinitely inferior force, came to reinforce the initiatives of norm so that in the new Constitution, currently in drafting, the nature and character of the Armed Forces and of Order and Security is profoundly transformed, which at each opportunity demonstrate not to have detached themselves from the [Doctrine of National Security](#).

There are already three such popular initiatives submitted to the Constitutional Convention.

Cuellar's bravado responds to a long tradition of the Chilean Army, whose glass roof (or straw tail) on the subject does not seem to have been understood by the heirs of the dictator Augusto Pinochet: if something has characterized this armed body in its history, it is to have repressed, kidnapped, tortured, murdered and made thousands of its own fellow civilians disappear happily... always unarmed.

It has been different when opponents were armed and trained.

The accounts of the participants of the attack against Pinochet, in 1986, agree that the military personal guard of the dictator did not put up any resistance. They fled in terror at the first shooting, hid under vehicles or even threw themselves into a ravine, as the judicial reconstitutions showed. If Pinochet did not fall that day, it was as much because of the failures of the attackers' weaponry as it was because of the quality of the car's armor and the expertise of the driver.

Pinochet did not die, but the attackers all escaped unharmed, making a fool of the specialized commandos who had sworn to give their lives for their boss.

In Chile it is never said, but in Peru the outrages of the victorious Chilean troops – an Army organized in a hurry in 1879 with a levy of peasants – against the civilian population in the towns they occupied are known. The war launched in 1879 against Peru

and Bolivia to annex the saltpeter deposits was the last armed conflict in which Chile participated.

In the Wallmapu the memory of the genocide known as "Pacification of the Araucanía", perpetrated by the military forces between 1861 and 1883, to take their lands and give them to European immigrants and Chilean landowners, is very fresh.

One of Norma's Popular Initiatives, that of Captain (R) Juan Paineicura, makes a detailed description of 23 massacres perpetrated against civilians by the Chilean Army (see [here](#)).

The list does not include the 17 years of dictatorship between 1973 and 1991, in which at least three thousand people were killed, two thousand disappeared, and tens of thousands suffered kidnappings, torture, exile and persecution.



If there really are armed groups active in Mapuche territory – and they are not mere intelligence operations of the State or the powerful forestry corporations – to respond to Cuellar's call for a direct confrontation would be plain stupidity: the very purpose of a guerrilla is to avoid direct clash with forces vastly superior in number and firepower.

In that sense, the general's proposal would also be cowardly, because it proposes a situation in which victory would be assured: those supposed groups would necessarily be few, and precariously armed and trained. Their only advantage is that they know the terrain and have the support of the communities, the only way to evade the intense militarization of the area.

The three proposals for constitutional norms underline the need for the military forces to effectively subordinate themselves to civilian power, and to be non-deliberative, the only

way to avoid paperwork such as that of General Cuéllar, who would hardly say something like that without consulting his bosses.



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El Centro de Generales de Ejército, respalda la honesta y militar declaración del General Luis Felipe Cuellar.

Por su responsabilidad de mando, tiene derecho a expresar su convicción y advertencia ante los cobardes asesinos.

Aquí no opera, lo "políticamente correcto".

Alexander Kirk

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