

Chile Says Prisoners Down to 4000

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Chilean Ambassador Manuel Trucco has presented figures showing that 4,062 followers of the late President Salvador Allende remain jailed by the military government, which overthrew him two years ago.

Trucco said that he would not oppose a suggestion made last week by Secretary General Alejandro Orfila of the Organization of American States that the OAS Human Rights Commission return to Chile for on-scene verification of conditions there.

The 4,062 prisoners—about half the number cited by Chilean exiles and some international human rights groups—comprise 2,117 convicted of crimes against the state; 1,398 whose cases are before the military courts and 547 held

without charge under state of siege powers.

Trucco's announcement on Friday, together with a speech made Sept. 11 by President Augusto Pinochet, represent Chile's most detailed response to human rights pressure since Pinochet offered a year ago to free prisoners who agree to go into exile.

Almost 600 have left under that offer. Trucco said that of the 547 still held under the state of siege, 203 are free to leave but that no country has agreed to accept them.

The figures, obtained by Trucco from Santiago last week, show considerable change from the partial statistics given by Gen. Pinochet in his Sept. 11 speech.

Since then, the ambassador said, 95 prisoners have been freed to go to Panama and nine former high officials in

the Allende government, charged with being security threats, have been released from confinement.

Trucco emphasized two innovations in Pinochet's speech:

- While prisoners still must be tried by military courts, they now have the right to appeal to the independent supreme court. There had been no way to appeal.

- An advisory council including all past presidents and other dignitaries will be established to play what Trucco described as a quasi-legislative role. Since the military dissolved Congress on seizing power, there has been virtually no civilian participation in government.

Of some 34 top leaders of the Allende government being held a year ago, only seven remain prisoners, Trucco said.

He is reported to have added privately that these, too, would be released if Radio Moscow would drop its intense short-wave propaganda campaign against the junta. Most of the seven are Communists.

On the question of investigations by human rights groups, Trucco said: "It is much more desirable for us to have the matter remain in the OAS" than to bring in a United Nations group.

The initial OAS visit in August, 1974 resulted in a report documenting cases of torture and arbitrary arrest. Chile has accused the OAS commission's executive secretary, Bolivian Luis Reque, of passing that report to the U.N. Human Rights Commission without authorization and Trucco has led a campaign to have Reque sacked.