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Chile recognises 9,800 more victims of Pinochet's rule

A Chilean commission investigating human rights abuses under the former military leader Gen Augusto Pinochet says there are many more victims than previously documented.

Commission director Maria Luisa Sepulveda said they had identified another 9,800 people who had been held as political prisoners and tortured.

The new figures bring the total of recognised victims to 40,018.

The survivors will get lifetime pensions of about \$260 (£157) a month.

An earlier report by the commission recognised 27,153 people who suffered human rights violations under military rule.

The official number of those killed or forcibly disappeared now stands at 3,065.

'Peace and reconciliation'

Ms Sepulveda said the commission had examined 32,000 new claims of human rights abuses over the past 18 months.

She said of those, 9,800 were found to fulfil the commission's criteria.

In order to be officially recognised as victims, people had to have been:

Detained and/or tortured for political reasons by agents of the state or people at its service

Victims of forced disappearances or been executed for political reasons by agents of the state or people at its service

Been kidnapped or been the victims of assassination attempts for political reasons

Furthermore, all the cases had to have happened between 11 September 1973 and 10 March 1990, when Gen Pinochet was in power.

The BBC's Gideon Long in Santiago said Ms Sepulveda did not give details of the kind of abuses the victims had suffered, nor did she release the names of the victims.

The report was presented to Chilean President Sebastian Pinera at a ceremony in the presidential palace.

Justice Minister Teodoro Ribera said the document would contribute to peace and reconciliation in Chile.

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