

22 July 2020

Statement on the Serious Situation of Mapuche Prisoners on Hunger Strike in Chile

The Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America (SALSA), an international scholarly association comprised of professors, students, and practitioners, is writing to express our grave concerns about the health and wellbeing of some twenty Mapuche prisoners who are on hunger strike in the Temuco and Angol prisons in southern Chile.

Mapuche prisoners have repeatedly appealed to the authorities to await their trials or serve their sentences in their respective homes, or, at least, in an Education and Work Center. In the case of the *machi* (shaman) Celestino Cordova, he has asked to serve the rest of his sentence (11 years) in his *lof* (territory of origin) in order to carry out his healing tasks and renew his commitment to his *rewe*, the sacred space from which he gets his spiritual energy and on which he depends for his own physical health. These requests have been submitted following the norms established by Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ratified by Chile in 2008), and according to which the detention of Indigenous People must conform to the cultural norms in force among each distinct community.

Since June 24, various steps have been taken in order to seek a settlement conducive to the end of the hunger strike, and, above all, to resolve the demands raised by the prisoners. Until now, the Chilean government has not accepted any instance of negotiation beyond the commitment to organize roundtables for intercultural dialogues for the next two months, which does not take into account the urgent and serious health situation of the Mapuche prisoners.

We ask that the Chilean governmental authorities promptly enter into open negotiations with the representatives of the Mapuche prisoners to consider the current international regulations on matters of detention of Indigenous People and to urgently end the situation of serious health risk to these strikers.



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