
Chile: Police at the service of a forestry company murder a young Mapuche

The Mapuche People in Chile have been struggling against national and transnational forestry companies and against the State to recover their lands for years now. The encroachment of monoculture tree plantations in the VIII, IX and X Regions, where the Mapuche population is over 337,000 inhabitants, has involved Mapuche territorial ethnocide. The scarcity of land and the cultural and environmental destruction in the ecosystem of communities neighbouring the plantations, has made many of them rise up in self-defence. However the economic power of the companies under the sponsorship and protection of the Chilean State, represses any Mapuche mobilisation either through the courts, the police or through action by third parties.

Many have fallen in the Mapuche struggle to recover their territories and a further victim has just died in the hands of the police at the service of forestry companies. On 7 November, in the grounds of the Fundo Santa Alicia, presently in the hands of the Forestal Mininco S.A. Company, in one of the Chilean police's most brutal and merciless raids, seventeen year old Edmundo Alex Lemún was seriously wounded by a bullet in the head, shot by the Chilean Carabineros corps. On 12 November, the youth died in hospital.

His "crime" consisted of participating in an action carried out by his community, in an attempt to recover the Fundo Santa Alicia, in the hands of the Mininco forestry company (belonging to one of the most powerful forestry groups in Chile). The death of Lemún --a victim of repression in the midst of the struggles for territorial rights-- is mourned by the whole Mapuche People and is generating extreme tension in the zone. We would like to convey our solidarity to the Mapuche People and to the family of Edmundo Alex at this difficult time and to support them in their hard struggle for their rights.

Article based on information from: MAPUEXRPRESS, Mapuche Documentation Centre, Ñuke Mapu.