



CHILE

THE DOCTOR IS IN

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Santiago. First aid is given to a woman who passed out in the "Plaza de la Dignidad" because of the effects of the tear gas launched by the police.

Two months have passed since Chileans took to the streets of the country with large protests and demonstrations sparked by the inequality in the country. The demands of the protesters, who are supported by the majority of Chileans according to opinion polls, are about improving pensions and well-being of older adults, improving the quality of public health and access to quality public education. These demands have not been met yet. The protests, especially the pacific ones, have lost intensity but the discontent is still high and part of society perceives that the measures announced by the government are "insufficient." Plaza Baquedano, also known as plaza Italia, and since the 11th of November renamed "Plaza de la Dignidad", has initially been the symbol of the pacific protests, and it is now is becoming the epicentre of an increasingly violent conflict between police and protesters.

In this context, a group of volunteers and self-organized medics, paramedics and nurses, that call themselves "Brigadas" ("brigades"), are giving humanitarian help to all those in need: protesters, police, and bystanders who accidentally walk alongside the protests and end up being injured: "We are a neutral point, we serve everyone, regardless of political drives" explains Kika, the leader of the "Brigada salud". They do it at their own risk. All the people in the brigades are trained and follow protocols in the field to rescue people: "If we were not here, I'm not sure who would be giving them help" says Kika. She explained that the injuries caused by tear gases are the worst at the moment: "we are treating quite significant burns in patients that end up in facial disfigurements, especially because now the water sprayed by the police contains some chemicals".

The Chilean police is currently the focus of a new controversy following accusations that the water used to disperse demonstrations contains pepper spray and caustic soda. On Monday the 16th of December, a study of water samples used by Carabineros curated by the Health in Resistance Movement (MSR) revealed that the liquid contains pepper gas and caustic soda, which is a "highly corrosive" element. The Chilean Police rejected the accusations on the same day and said that all the materials used so far "are internationally validated."



Santiago. Shops in the CBD.



Santiago. Volunteers work incessantly to bring wounded protesters to a makeshift medical site. The volunteers rely on citizens and organizations' donations to get the first aid supplies.



Santiago. Tear gas and water used by Chilean police to disperse demonstrations irritates eyes, mouth, nose and lungs. Protesters wear special masks and glasses to protect themselves.



Santiago. "Primeros Auxilios. First Aid.



Santiago. A woman is reanimated by the rescue team of "Diaguitas" after fainting because of the tear gas. The woman was passing through "Plaza de la Dignidad", in the heart of the city of Santiago, when she was hit by tear gas.



"Vamos hacia la vida" on the wall, "Let's have a life". Clashes between groups of violent protesters and the police continue in the so-called "zona cero" of Santiago. From the 18th of October 2019, the clashes have been mostly concentrated in the area of "Plaza de la Dignidad", historically known as Plaza Baquedano.



Santiago. Volunteers of the so called brigada "Tecnicos en Ayuda TEA" that works incessantly to bring wounded protesters to a makeshift medical site. The wound was caused by a shot from the police. The weapon is unidentified. The volunteers rely on citizens and organizations' donations.



Santiago. The corner of the so called "Restless Collective Brigade". The volunteers work incessantly to bring wounded protesters to a makeshift medical site. Many of the volunteers are university students, who started working in pairs at the beginning of the social outbreak, to heal injured people with only a first aid kit. Then they decided to occupy this corner, where they are everyday from Monday to Friday.



Santiago. A volunteer doctor sprays a mixture of water and sage on the irritated eyes of a woman, who was hit by tear gas.



Plaza Baquedano, one of the most symbolic places of the city of Santiago. After the social outbreak of October 18 2019, it became the iconic meeting point for the protesters. Since November 11, it appears on Google Maps as "Plaza de la Dignidad" (Dignity Square), as renamed by the protesters.



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Santiago. A view of the city.



Santiago. Plaza de la Ciudadanía, located in the southern façade of the Palacio de La Moneda.



Santiago. Kika, from Diaguita NGO, and one of the volunteer doctors, treats a wounded boy.



Santiago. "Zona cero". Shotgun pellets fired by Carabineros, despite in mid November police director Gen. Mario Rozas said the use of pellet guns will be suspended.



Santiago. Self-organized groups are working to help all those in need.



Plaza Baquedano, one of the most symbolic places of the city of Santiago. After the social outbreak of October 18 2019, it became the iconic meeting point for the protesters. Since November 11 it appears on Google Maps as "Plaza de la Dignidad" (Dignity Square), as renamed by the protesters.



Santiago. An injured girl gets help from the "Health Brigade" set up in "Plaza de la Dignidad".



Santiago. Volunteers of the "Equipo Rescatista" that works together with the brigades incessantly to help wounded people in the protests.



Santiago. The work of the health brigade continues until late, serving the people in need.



A man is assisted by volunteers of the so called "Restless Collective Brigade" in their makeshift medical site located in the "zona cero" of Santiago. The wound was caused by a shot from the police, despite Carabineros announced in mid November they would suspend the use of shots during the protests. The nurse said to the man he was very lucky to be alive, as the bullet went very close to his carotid.



Santiago. Volunteers of the so called "Restless Collective Brigade" take care of the all wounded people during the demonstrations. Many of the volunteers are university students, who started working in pairs at the beginning of the social outbreak with only a first aid kit. They rely on citizens or organizations' donations.



Santiago. Banco de Chile, Las Condes suburb. Metal sheets cover the doors and windows of the bank to protect them from the rage of the protesters.



Santiago. A man's head is treated by one of the medical students of Santo Tomas University, who since October 19th 2019 has been working tirelessly with the rest of the team to give humanitarian help to the Chilean people.



Santiago. "La historia la cuentan los pueblos". The story is told by the people.



Santiago. A volunteer medicate a man's eyes to alleviate the effects of tear gas and water thrown by police water cannons.



Santiago. A volunteer sprays water and sage on a woman's face to alleviate the effects of tear gas and water thrown by police water cannons.



Santiago, Chile.. Clashes between groups of protesters and the police continue in the so-called "zona cero" of Santiago. From the 18th of October 2019, the clashes have been mostly concentrated in the area of "Plaza de la Dignidad", historically known as Plaza Baquedano.



Santiago. He calls himself on Instagram "*El weon de la moto*". Supporting all the people fighting for a better Chile without carrying stones but carrying water. Without causing wounds but healing them. Without throwing water but offering it".

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