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### Chile Human Rights Image

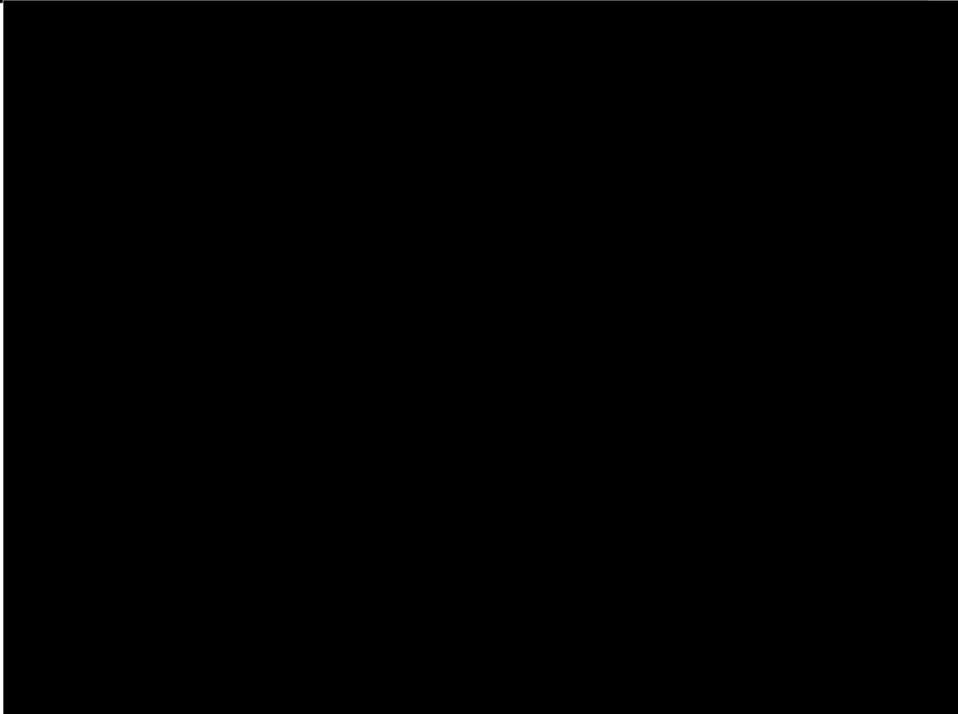
The Chilean junta is making a determined effort to improve its image on human rights issues. It has recently released 49 political prisoners and pledged to expedite other pending requests for pardon.

Officials of the Pinochet government have also indicated their intent to resume talks with the UN Human Rights Commission, which were broken off last July when Pinochet abruptly barred the visit of the commission's investigating team. That decision provoked strong criticism from the UN and from Western countries that had supported the UN bid. At its meeting in February, the UN commission issued a report condemning Santiago's internal security practices; the report was based largely on accounts by Chilean exiles.

Foreign Minister Carvajal told Secretary Simon in Santiago last week that at least 41 Chilean officials have been prosecuted for abusing human rights. Public knowledge of government efforts to curb maltreatment by punishing those responsible may have a sobering impact on the security forces and could improve Chile's image abroad.

The meeting of the OAS General Assembly in Santiago next month may stimulate the government to work further to improve its practices. The Inter-American Human Rights Commission has Chile on its agenda, providing even more incentive.

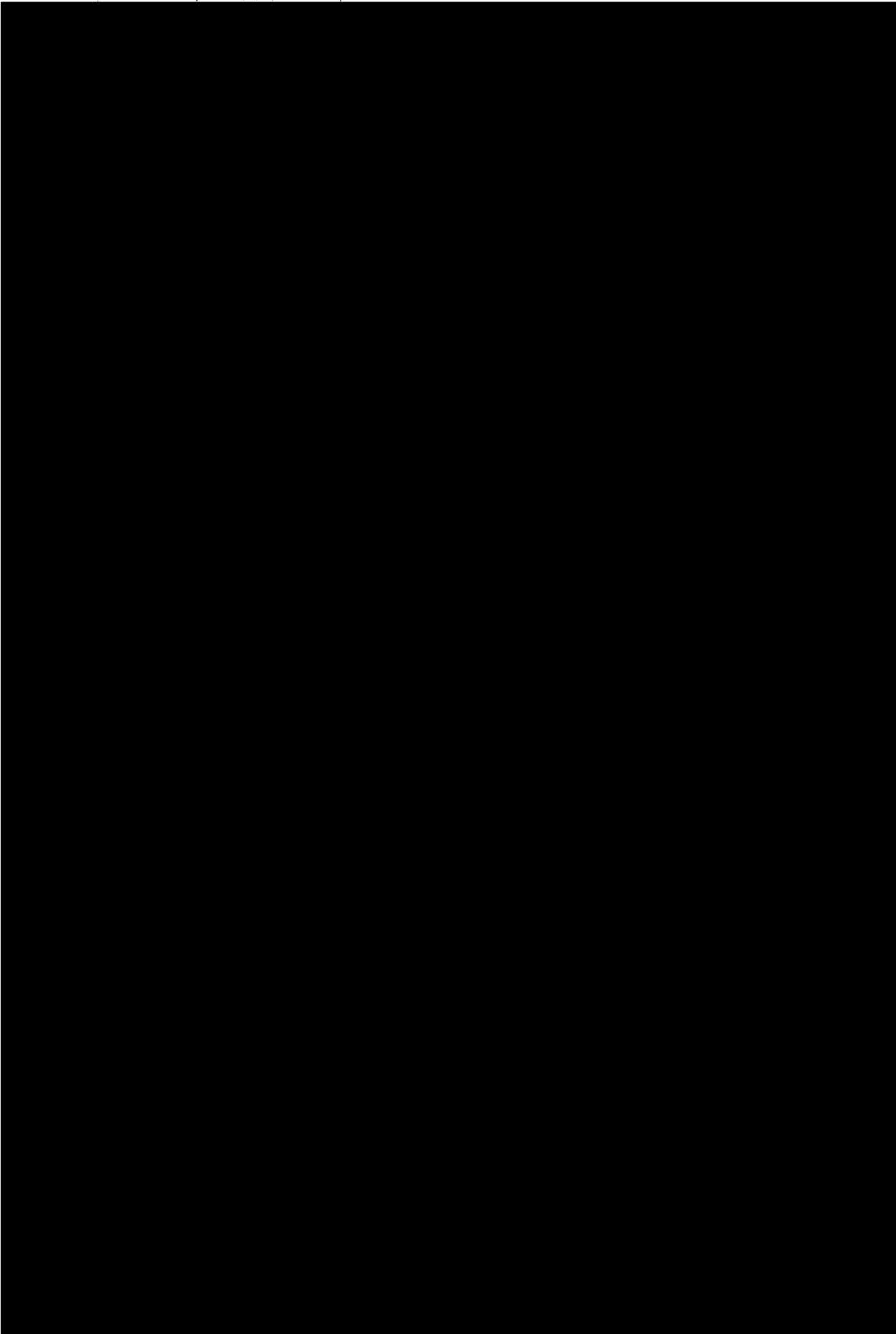
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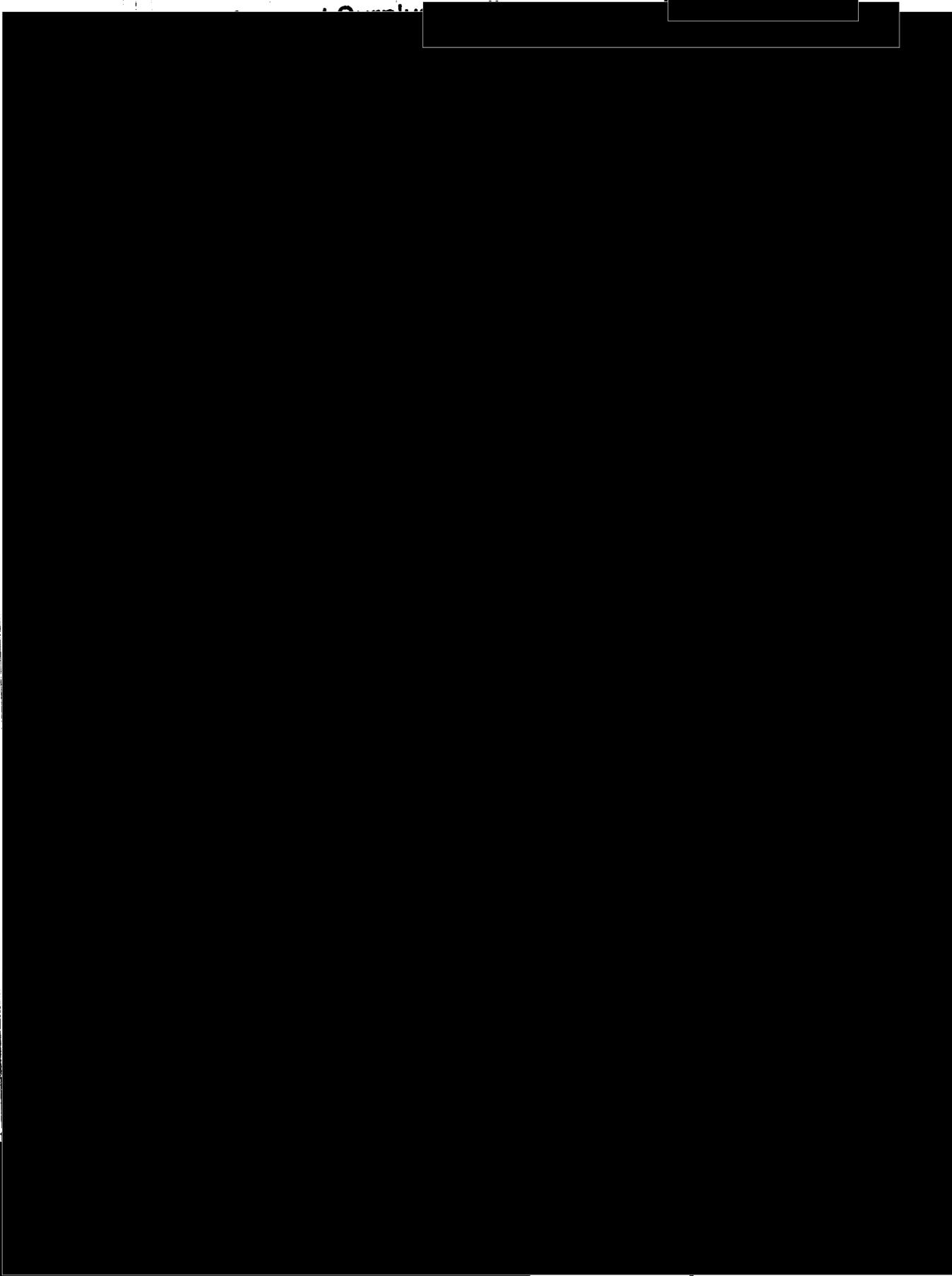


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