



NEWS IN BRIEF

**UNITED STATES**  
FBI arrests 16 deputies over LA prison beatings

Eighteen current and former Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies saw themselves as being "above the law" when they engaged in crimes that included beating inmates and jail visitors, falsifying reports and trying to obstruct an FBI inquiry into

America's largest prison system, federal officials said yesterday.

The investigation into corruption and civil rights abuses led to the arrests on Monday of 16 of the 18 defendants. At least two no longer work for the department. "These incidents... demonstrated behaviour that had become institutionalised," Andre Birotte Jr, a US attorney, said. **AP**

**BRAZIL**  
Former President was murdered by military

Former President Juscelino Kubitschek was murdered in 1976 by the military regime that ran the country, the Sao Paulo Truth Commission has found. At the time, officials said that Kubitschek's death on the highway between Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro was simply the result of a road accident. **AP**

**ROMANIA**  
Spend less on Aids, more on culture, says minister

The Culture Minister, Daniel Barbu, has sparked a furore after he complained about the amount his country spent fighting Aids. "The budget [for Aids charities] was half that devoted to the Culture Ministry," Mr Barbu said. A group that supports Aids sufferers said the remarks were offensive.



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# Mission will continue, says Hollande as he flies in to war-torn CAR

## Five hundred died in clashes between Muslims and Christians over the last week

JOHN LICHFIELD  
IN PARIS

François Hollande became the first French President for two decades to fly into a war zone last night, making a stopover in the anarchic Central African Republic on his way home from Nelson Mandela's memorial ceremony.

President Hollande arrived less than a day after the deaths of two French paratroopers and as aid workers reported that the death toll from violence between Muslims and Christians in the last week had exceeded 500.

Arriving at Bangui airport last night for talks President Michel Djotodia, Mr Hollande said that the 1,600 strong French intervention force deployed on Saturday would pursue its efforts to prevent a full-scale, genocidal civil war.

"The situation has not changed," Mr Hollande said. "We knew that this was a dangerous mission. It will continue because it must continue if carnage is to be avoided."

The two French paratroopers were killed by a burst of automatic fire late on Monday night as they patrolled near to the airport where Mr Hollande arrived. There is no precedent in the 60 years of the French Fifth Republic for a head of state visiting a foreign country while a French armed intervention is still in progress.

Mr Hollande's visit was compared by the French media yesterday to President François Mitterrand's decision to visit the besieged Bosnian city of Sarajevo in 1992.

Although the arrival of French troops briefly calmed the violence at the weekend, communal tit-for-tat violence exploded once again yesterday. A Christian mob set fire to a mosque in the Fou neighborhood of Bangui in retaliation for the apparently random murder, rape and pillaging of the mainly Muslim Seleka (alliance) rebels in recent days.

In other parts of the city Seleka forces had re-emerged on to empty streets after lying low since the French force arrived. The French soldiers, and a 2,300 strong multinational African force, are supposed to disarm the rebels but aid workers said that there was no sign of the Seleka fighters surrendering without a fight.

The French paratroopers were part of a patrol ambushed

by a group of five to 10 men. The loss of two soldiers so early in the operation is a substantial blow to France. Only seven French soldiers have died in the nearly 12-month-old intervention against Islamist rebels in Mali, which is still going on.

The political and civil structures of the Central African Republic collapsed after Muslim rebels, including many fighters from Sudan and Chad, installed President Djotodia in March. Although a de facto "Muslim" versus "Christian" conflict, the motives of the rebels appear more sectarian and avaricious than religious or political. President Djotodia rapidly lost control of his forces who have been accused of a series of savage attacks on Christian civilians.

Half the 4,800,000 population is said to be in need of humanitarian aid. Over a million people face severe food shortages or famine.

Central Africa, a French colony until 1960, is one of the poorest countries in the world. There have long been religious and economic tensions between the minority Muslims, who are traditionally livestock farmers, and wealthier and more populous Christians, who are mostly crop-growers. There has never before, however, been sustained violence between the two groups.



President Hollande meets French soldiers in Bangui, Central African Republic, last night **REUTERS**



Jaime Huenchullan occupies a wooden shack on a small plot of land outside the town of Ercilla **ED STOCKER**

# The nation that's still waging war on Native Americans

Chile's refusal to recognise ancestral land claims has sparked a deadly conflict with the Mapuche people. **By ED STOCKER in Araucanía**

Life loiters at a slow pace in the town of Ercilla, a seven-hour bus journey south of the Chilean capital, Santiago.

Jaime Huenchullan, 35, lives in a wooden shack on a plot of land outside the rural town's limits. He grows his own vegetables in a small orchard and milks his sheep every morning at first light. Yet despite the bucolic scene, Mr Huenchullan is a protagonist in the South American nation's longest-running and most acrimonious social conflict, pitting activists from the indigenous Mapuche population, to which he belongs, against the Chilean state.

On paper, the land where he lives – part of the autonomous Temuicui community, according to the sign at the property's entrance – belongs to Rene Urban. Mr Huenchullan, along with his wife, Griselda, and their two young children, has been occupying the land since March as part of an ancestral land rights claim. The set-up is basic; there is no running water or bathroom. "The colonial settlers can say that this territory legally belongs to



them," says Mr Huenchullan, a burly figure with shiny black hair tied in a ponytail. "But this land belongs to the Temuicui community for historical and ancestral reasons."

The dispute has its roots in the so-called "pacification" of the Araucanía region, where Ercilla is located, that began in 1861 when the territory was incorporated into the Chilean state. Faced with the might of the army, the Mapuche people lost most of their land.

Chile fails to recognise ancestral land claims. Instead, it acknowledges legal paperwork from several decades later when the Mapuche population's land had already been reduced. Successive

governments have clamped down on activists campaigning for indigenous land rights.

Most controversially, an anti-terrorist law with its roots in Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship has been used to pursue Mapuche leaders through the courts – a move criticised by one of the UN's top lawyers in July this year. The last three deaths of Mapuche leaders have all been in clashes with police, while human rights groups condemn the effect armed raids have on young Mapuche children. "We are seven siblings and we have all known the inside of a prison cell," says Mr Huenchullan, who is a community spokesman. "We have all had to deal with accusations and legal proceedings from the settlers, the police and the business sector. I have been accused of arson, threats, theft and public disorder."

Mr Huenchullan's older brother, Jorge, lives in a nearby settlement with more than 100 families. He was one of several activists from Temuicui who had the anti-terror law applied against him in 2009 when President Michelle

Bachelet was first in power. "I've passed almost all of my youth persecuted by the police," he says. "There's simply not the political will to find a solution to the conflict."

Ms Bachelet, a 62-year-old doctor, looks likely to return to return to office with a win in the second round of elections this Sunday. She has vowed to never again enact the legislation against the Mapuche people.

But the Mapuche dispute has continued to intensify over the past decade with hunger strikes and violence. In January, a married couple burnt to death in Vilcún after their farmhouse was set on fire. The Mapuche leader Celestino Cordova will go on trial in February, accused of their murder.

Activists such as Mr Huenchullan dismiss the trials, saying they are "staged", pointing to the 80 per cent of Mapuche who are cleared in criminal cases. His claims are impossible to verify as the regional public defender does not keep specific figures on land-dispute cases. One public-sector source, who asked not to be named, said acquittal rates were high but institutions did not want to publish the figures out of fear of the conservative land-owning elite who traditionally reject the Mapuche land claim.

Hector Urban – son of landowner Rene – paints a very different picture of the land conflict as he stands outside the property that Mr Huenchullan claims. He says Mr Huenchullan and his entourage are a group of highly armed, violent individuals. "This property has been illegally usurped," he says. "We don't have anything to do with the issue because we

bought the land in a legal and transparent way. Today in Chile there are organisations that are in charge of solving these problems – and one of them is Conadi."

Conadi (the National Corporation for Indigenous Development) is the sole body charged with resolving the Mapuche land dispute and is based in Araucanía's capital, Temuco. When *The Independent* visited, neither the national nor regional director are available for interviews and a follow-up email goes unanswered.

For Veronica Figueroa Huencho, from the University of Chile's Institute of National Affairs, Conadi is fundamentally flawed because it applies "market rules" to solve a political problem. The organisation is allotted a yearly budget to buy properties from landowners – if they want to sell – even if the price is heavily inflated. It has no power to fix prices or expropriate. "Conadi is an organisation that ignores the desires of the indigenous population," Ms Figueroa Huencho says. "It's an organisation with very little legitimacy."

The majority of Chile's Mapuches, who represent 9 per cent of the population, according to a 2012 census, live in the urban centres of Santiago and Temuco – removed from the day-to-day conflict. Yet in the latter, many activists believe in the need for an autonomous region.

According to a study by Santiago's Central University in August, 63 per cent of Chileans believe the Mapuche should have their own territory, yet politicians look unlikely to cede to this demand. So the chance of solving the country's bitter land dispute remains slim.



**SCAN PAGE** to watch a video of the Mapuche conflict in Araucanía