



Report

Project “Digital Technologies and Justice: Civil Society and the Unrelenting Struggle against Impunity in Chile”

24 July 2026



DATES

15–22 December 2025

CITIES

Valdivia · Santiago · Valparaíso

PARTICIPANTS

More than 70 representatives from civil society organisations, government, the legal profession, and academia

ANNIVERSARY

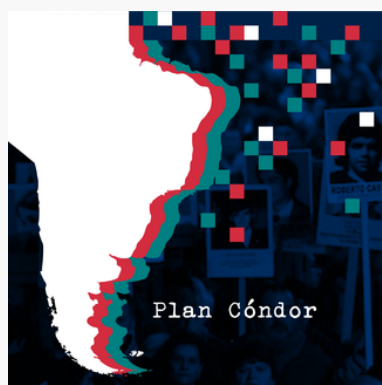
50 years since the establishment of Operation Condor in Santiago (1975)

CO-ORGANISED BY

plancondor.org · National Institute of Human Rights (INDH)

Culture, Memory and Human Rights’ Unit of the Ministry of Cultures, the Arts and Heritage of Chile

Funded by UCL Innovation and Enterprise Fund and the HEIF Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund.





Executive Summary

Between 15 and 22 December 2025, the Plancondor.org team – comprising Dr Francesca Lessa (University College London), Rodrigo Barbano (Sitios de Memoria Uruguay), Karinna Fernández (Acción Cívica), Mariana Risso (Sitios de Memoria Uruguay), and Dr Sebastián Smart (Anglia Ruskin University) – led three knowledge-exchange workshops and one follow-up workshop in Chile focusing on digital technologies and the fight against impunity.

The workshops fostered productive exchanges of experience and in-depth discussions on critical issues, including the mercantilisation of sensitive human rights data and the ethical challenges associated with the use of digital technologies. More than 70 representatives from human rights organisations, government institutions, the legal profession, and academia participated in the activities, which took place close to the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Operation Condor in Santiago in 1975.

The workshops were funded through the UCL Innovation and Enterprise Fund and the HEIF Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund and were co-organised with the National Institute of Human Rights (INDH) and the Culture, Memory and Human Rights’ Unit of Chile’s Ministry of Cultures, the Arts and Heritage.

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Knowledge Exchange Workshops
Valdivia · Santiago · Valparaíso

70+

representatives from civil society
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50

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Knowledge Exchange Workshops

16/12 Valdivia

19/12 Santiago

22/12 Valparaíso

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The workshops took place at a particularly significant moment for human rights in Chile. On the one hand, November 2025 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Operation Condor in Santiago – a system of transnational repression coordinated by South American dictatorships that enabled the cross-border persecution of political opponents living in exile. On the other hand, on 14 December 2025, José Antonio Kast, candidate of the Republican Party, won the second round of Chile’s presidential election. His political platform has been characterised by anti-rights rhetoric and by a favourable stance towards the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

The workshops were designed around the experience and expertise developed by the Plancondor.org team through its 2024 toolkit, *“Digital Technologies and Memory: The Pursuit of Justice in South America”*, which systematises the knowledge generated through the plancondor.org and sitiosdememoria.uy projects. The toolkit also identifies a series of best practices for the use of digital technologies, focusing on three key areas:

- 1 The recovery, systematisation, and digitisation of documents.
- 2 The georeferencing of sites where crimes against humanity have been committed.
- 3 Ethical challenges in projects that bring together human rights, memory, and access to information.





Co-organisation with Local Partner Institutions

The knowledge exchange workshops were co-organised by the Plancondor.org team, the National Institute of Human Rights (INDH), and Chile's Ministry of Cultures, the Arts and Heritage. They pursued two complementary objectives. First, they sought to strengthen collaboration with Chilean human rights organisations to enhance the impact of their work on memory, truth, and justice. Second, they aimed to promote knowledge exchange and the co-production of good practices in the use of digital technologies for memory preservation and the pursuit of justice.

The project team worked closely with local partner institutions throughout the planning and delivery of the workshops, ensuring meaningful participation by policymakers, public officials, and local communities. Together, we co-designed and co-delivered each workshop, jointly developing the programmes, identifying participants, securing venues, and coordinating the technical resources required for the activities. These included a high-resolution document scanner provided by the INDH, whose staff transported it specifically to Valdivia and Valparaíso for the hands-on capacity building and training sessions. Together, we brought together a diverse group of participants, including human rights activists, archivists, lawyers, academics, and government officials.

Morning Session: Exchange of Experiences

Across all three cities, the morning sessions focused on sharing experiences, achievements, and ongoing challenges in the use of digital technologies for human rights and memory work (for instance, we covered topics such as the preservation, dissemination, and open public access to documentary collections and archives, the development of interactive digital tools, including maps of sites of memory and locations where human rights violations were committed), and the ethical questions that arise from using these technologies.

Members of the Plancondor.org team presented the origins and development of the platform, highlighting recent innovations, including the introduction of bulk data download and export functions and a new section dedicated to the fiftieth anniversary of Operation Condor. Representatives from a wide range of public institutions and civil society organisations also presented their work, including the National Institute of Human Rights (INDH); the Ministry of Cultures, the Arts and Heritage; the Neltume Museum and Memory Cultural Centre; the Association of Former Political Prisoners and Their Families (Valdivia); the Corporation of Families of the Disappeared and Executed Political Prisoners of Valdivia; the Human Rights Programme of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights; the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIPER); Londres 38 Espacio de Memorias; the National Migration Service; the National Archives of Chile; and the Former Barón Police Station Site of Memory.



The presentations delivered by representatives of Chilean civil society and state bodies highlighted both the significant progress achieved and the challenges that continue to shape work in the fields of memory, truth, and justice. In the next section, we selected a few examples of the initiatives presented during the three workshops.

Human Rights Programme

Macarena Milovic and Evelyn Soto presented the Map of the Trajectories of Victims of Enforced Disappearance, developed by the Human Rights Programme of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights as part of the “National Search Plan” (Plan Nacional de Búsqueda, PNB). The map was designed to address two fundamental challenges: the fragmentation of existing data and the lack of standardisation in the available information, both of which had hindered effective analysis and coordination across the different components of the National Search Plan. The Map of Trajectories represents an unprecedented initiative, both because of its public accessibility and its systematic use of official sources. By bringing together previously dispersed information within a unified framework, it enables the consolidation and structuring of data that had previously existed in fragmented form. The project is grounded in an interdisciplinary and interinstitutional approach, bringing together legal expertise, archival and documentary research, and specialist teams responsible for tracing victims’ trajectories, while also drawing on the collaboration of the Civil Registry and Identification Service, and the National Medical Service. The Map has been conceived as a unified, publicly accessible, and standardised database designed to reconstruct and visualise the territorial and judicial trajectories of victims. In doing so, it strengthens both the right to truth and the state’s capacity to advance the search for victims of enforced disappearance. The platform is now publicly available through the National Search Plan’s digital portal: <https://mapa.plandebusqueda.cl/mapa>

Londres 38 Digital Archive

Leslie Araneda, representing Londres 38 Espacio de Memorias, presented the principles, objectives, and ongoing challenges of the Londres 38 Digital Archive, which has been developed as a central resource for guaranteeing access to information, upholding the right to truth, and supporting processes of memory, reparation, and resistance in Chile. Londres 38 is a site of memory established through the recovery of a former detention, torture, and extermination centre operated by the Chilean dictatorship between 1973 and 1975 in central Santiago.

The Digital Archive is conceived not simply as a documentary repository, but as an ethical and political instrument that seeks to deepen understanding of the past, enable the exercise of rights in the present, and contribute to broader processes of social transformation. The project is guided by the principle of maximum public access, recognising archives as indispensable instruments for advancing truth and justice, while understanding the concealment of documentary evidence as a mechanism through which impunity, denial, and collective forgetting are perpetuated. Within this framework, Londres 38 promotes public (not exclusively judicial) access to documentation relating to state repression, human rights, and historical memory, while encouraging wider public debate about these materials.

The Digital Archive currently provides online access to approximately 5,700 documents in a wide variety of formats, including textual, graphic, and audiovisual materials. Its collections document both histories of repression and histories of resistance associated with the site itself, as well as broader political trajectories. The Archive comprises documentation produced by the organisation, materials assembled through research and memory initiatives, including *Operation Return* (*Operación Retorno*), together with documents donated by individuals and organisations. At present, the collections are organised into seven archival fonds and eight thematic collections.

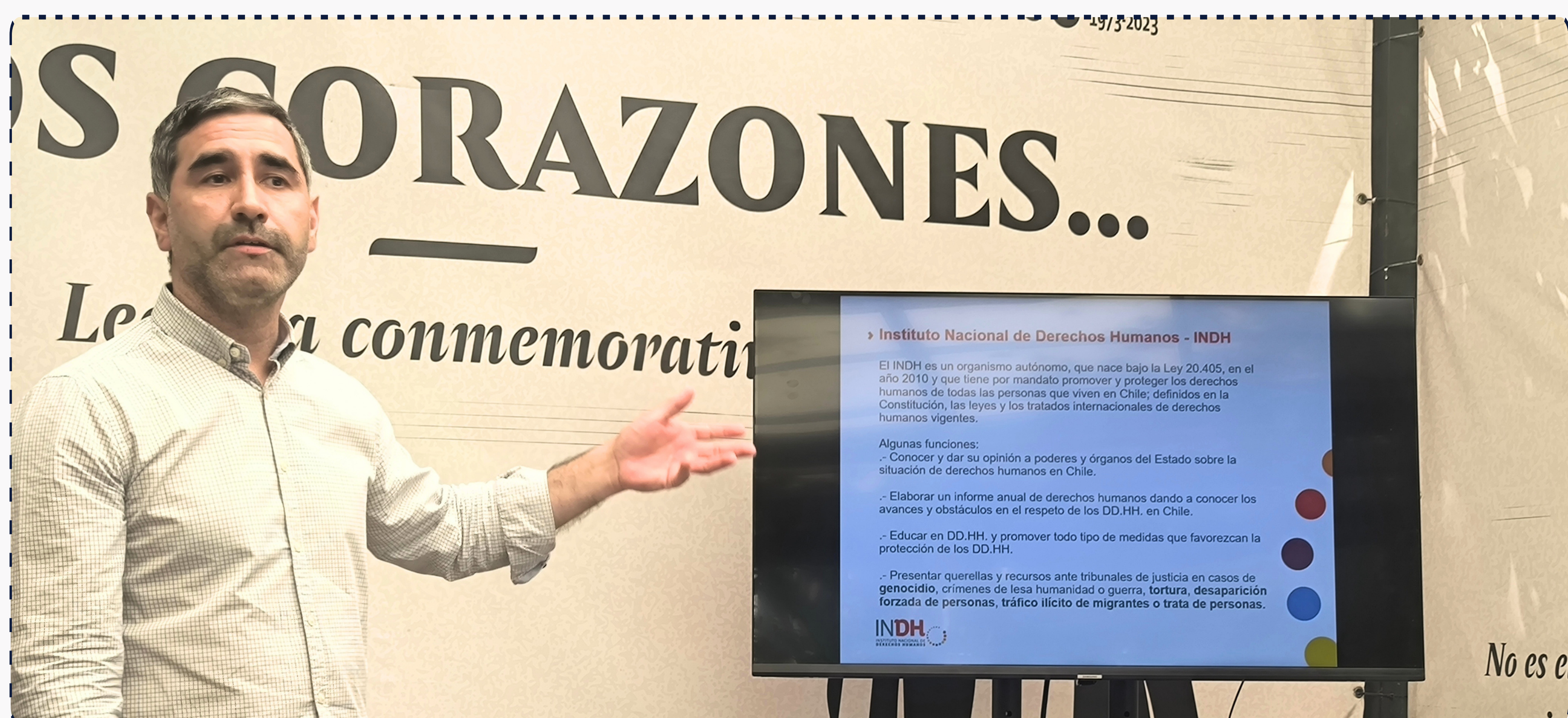


The Colonia Dignidad Archive

Leonardo Urrutia, Head of the Memory, Archives and Documentation Unit at the National Institute of Human Rights (INDH), presented the Institute's ongoing work to digitise and analyse the documentary holdings of the Colonia Dignidad Archive. Colonia Dignidad was a settlement established by German immigrants in 1961 in the municipality of Parral, in Chile's Maule Region. During the military dictatorship (1973–1990), it operated as a clandestine centre for detention, torture, and extrajudicial killing. The archive was discovered following police searches conducted in 2000 and 2005, after which it was seized and placed under the authority of the judge responsible for investigating cases involving sexual abuse and crimes against humanity committed by the leadership of the organisation.

In April 2014, Judge Jorge Zepeda of the Santiago Court of Appeal, who was leading the investigation into the criminal association known as "Former Colonia Dignidad," transferred to the INDH a compact disc containing 46,308 digital files, which at the time were understood to comprise the documentary evidence confiscated during the judicial investigation. This transfer resulted from sustained requests made both by civil society memory organisations and by the INDH itself. Following receipt of the archive, the INDH issued a public statement expressing its commitment to making these materials accessible, particularly to victims, their families, and civil society organisations, in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 20,285 on Access to Public Information and Law No. 19,628 on the Protection of Personal Data. In 2019, Chilean courts began to be granted access to the Colonia Dignidad digital platform.

During the workshop, Urrutia described the extensive work undertaken by the INDH to organise and systematise the archive's contents, with the objective of making the results publicly available once this process has been completed.



Neltume Museum and Memory Cultural Centre

Ignacio Ayala, representing the Neltume Museum and Memory Cultural Centre (CCMMN), described the work carried out by the Archives and Memory Unit since its establishment in June 2023. It was created with the initial objective of organising the historical documentation accumulated by the organisation over many years, both in physical and digital formats. The CCMMN Archive comprises seven archival fonds whose collections document the local history of Neltume, with particular emphasis on everyday life and forestry work, the processes of political mobilisation and trade union organisation that led to the creation of the Panguipulli Forestry and Timber Complex (COFOMAP), the history of this state-owned enterprise between 1971 and 1988, and the memory of the human rights violations committed during Chile's civil-military dictatorship, together with the forms of resistance that emerged in 1973 and 1981.

The Archive also includes a photographic collection, an oral history collection, and a collection documenting the many forms of international solidarity expressed both before and after the 1973 coup d'état.

The CCMMN Archive is conceived as a community archive, reflecting not only the centrality of local history within its collections but also the leading role played by the community of Neltume and its surrounding area in donating materials and shaping the Archive's development. The documentary collections are available for consultation both on site and remotely by prior arrangement with the staff. The photographic collection is also accessible online through the Centre's website: <https://archivo.museoneltume.cl>





Afternoon Sessions in Valdivia and Valparaíso - Capacity Building.

In both Valdivia and Valparaíso, participants took part in a practical and conceptual training session on document digitisation, making use of the high-resolution scanner provided by the National Institute of Human Rights (INDH).

The session began with a discussion of the good practices in the project's toolkit. Rodrigo Barbano and Mariana Risso emphasised the importance of preserving and disseminating documentary materials while highlighting the influence that favourable – and, equally, unfavourable – institutional contexts can have on digitisation initiatives. Their presentation outlined the successive stages of a digitisation project and the good practices associated with each phase, from the initial selection of materials through digitisation, image processing and post-processing, to the publication of collections on digital platforms that provide open public access.

The conceptual discussion was followed by practical digitisation sessions using the scanner. Participants brought a wide range of archival materials from their own collections – including photographs, maps, and historical documents – which they digitised during the workshop. In Valdivia, the archivist from the Neltume Museum and Memory Cultural Centre, together with members of the Association of Former Political Prisoners and Their Families of Valdivia, had selected a range of documentary materials for digitisation. Among these were items donated to the Museum, including documents produced by Chilean organisations active abroad during the years of political exile. A variety of documentary and graphic materials were successfully digitised during the session.

The materials digitised in Valdivia included *El Rebelde en la Clandestinidad No. 143* (November 1978), the front page of *El Diario Austral No. 1390* (25 September 1986), and the educational resource *Ruta de la Memoria de la Región de Los Ríos (Memory Route of the Los Ríos Region)*. In Valparaíso, participants digitised photographs, a handwritten letter, a collage, and a sketch map of the Borgoño Barracks, all of which had been produced or collected the workshop held in that city in January 2025.

These materials, which possess significant historical and testimonial value, contribute to the preservation, accessibility, and wider circulation of memories relating to experiences of repression and resistance. For many participants, the practical training in archival digitisation and digital technologies represented the first opportunity of its kind in both the Los Ríos and Valparaíso Regions. The sessions were very positively received and widely recognised as a valuable contribution to local capacity building.



Afternoon Session in Santiago

Unlike the capacity building workshops in Valdivia and Valparaíso, the afternoon session in Santiago a structured discussion among participants, organised around three thematic areas.

The first theme, on Digital Spaces as Sites of Memory and Contestation, reflected on the role of the state in shaping the circulation of information and public narratives, while emphasising the importance of broadening these debates to include civil society organisations, human rights practitioners, and academic researchers. The dialogue highlighted several principles of good practice, including ensuring open access to information and promoting narratives grounded in robust documentary evidence and long-term digital preservation.

The second discussion, on Regional Contexts: Opportunities and Constraints, examined how political and institutional contexts across South America influence both the implementation and long-term sustainability of initiatives relating to memory and human rights. Participants observed that, over the past decade, many organisations have operated in increasingly restrictive environments characterised by funding reductions, attacks, and attempts at censorship. In response, they stressed the importance of identifying context-specific opportunities while simultaneously adopting measures to safeguard both information and documentation compiled.

The final debate, on the Toolkit and Building Sustainable Digital Ecosystems, noted that the toolkit synthesises the experience gained through the development of both the Plancondor.org and sitiosdememoria.uy platforms, while also incorporating lessons drawn from a range of related initiatives. The conversation underscored the importance of building collaborative and sustainable digital ecosystems capable of extending the reach and long-term impact of memory projects, asserting that digital technologies should expand and amplify the influence of these initiatives, making it essential to maintain common standards and encourage the free reuse of digital resources. Against a backdrop of increasingly aggressive public discourse and the resurgence of authoritarian tendencies across the region, participants concluded that the appropriate response lies in expanding access to information, fostering informed public debate, and strengthening collective engagement.



List of Workshops' Presenters:

- **Francesca Lessa (UCL) and Sebastián Smart (ARU)** TEAM PLANCONDOR.ORG
- **Mariana Risso and Rodrigo Barbano** Sitios de Memoria - Uruguay TEAM PLANCONDOR.ORG
- **Leonardo Urrutia** INDH
- **Ignacio Ayala** Neltume Museum and Memory Cultural Centre
- **Pedro Mella** The Association of Former Political Prisoners and Their Families, Valdivia
- **Ida Sepúlveda and Francisco Esperguel** Corporation of Families of the Disappeared and Executed Political Prisoners of Valdivia
- **Macarena Milovic and Evelyn Soto** Human Rights Programme of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights – Data on enforced disappearances in Chile: Map of the Trajectories of Victims
- **Mauricio Weibel** Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIPER)
- **Leslie Araneda** Londres 38
- **Felipe Mallea Toledo and Jocelyn Dunstan** National Migration Service and Pontifical Catholic University of Chile
- **Pedro Fuentes and Javier Contreras** Human Rights Programme of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights – Territorial management of search sites
- **Valentina Rojas** National Archives of Chile
- **Cristián Schultze and Francia Jamett** Culture, Memory and Human Rights' Unit of the Ministry of Cultures, the Arts and Heritage
- **Jorge Maldonado** The Former Barón Police Station Site of Memory

Follow-up Workshop

On 18 December 2025, we held a three-hour follow-up workshop in Santiago, bringing together 19 key stakeholders working at the intersection of digital technologies and human rights. Participants included human rights lawyers, civil society activists, NGO practitioners, public policymakers, representatives of government ministries, researchers, and academics.

The workshop built upon the user-led knowledge exchange on digital technologies and memory that took place on 4 July 2024 at Alberto Hurtado University in Santiago, Chile, attended by more than 50 participants in both in-person and online formats. During that earlier workshop, participants had engaged in an in-depth discussion of the draft toolkit “Digital Technologies and Memory.” Their comments and recommendations informed the subsequent revision of the document, which was published in September 2024.

The principal objective of the follow-up workshop was to further strengthen and consolidate our collaboration with these key stakeholders, whose expertise had been instrumental in shaping the development of the toolkit during 2024. At the same time, we sought to identify and discuss aspects of the toolkit that might require expansion or revision considering ongoing technological developments and the evolving challenges faced by organisations working in the field of human rights.

The discussion was organised around five principal themes:

- The impact of the toolkit
- Future expansion and revision of the manual
- Practical implementation and operational challenges
- Risks and safeguards associated with the use of digital technologies
- Partnerships and the long-term sustainability of the digital ecosystem



Reflections and Suggestions about the toolkit

During the discussion, participants explored various aspects of the toolkit, with many highlighting its most valuable contributions.

The Museum of Memory and Human Rights

Representatives from the Museum of Memory and Human Rights praised the manual's core philosophy and approach. They noted that, instead of demanding technical perfection from the outset, the toolkit encourages organisations to move forward using their existing resources, while acknowledging practical and material constraints.

This pragmatic approach is especially valuable for human rights groups, which often operate without specialised technical teams or advanced IT capabilities. By removing the barrier of unrealistic technical prerequisites, the toolkit makes digitising, organising, and utilising information genuinely achievable.

Furthermore, it was emphasised that the toolkit aligns perfectly with two of the Museum's core principles: public access to information and the adoption of free and open-source software. Ultimately, it was noted that its value extends far beyond the document itself; it serves as a catalyst for sharing experiences, bridging institutional gaps, and fostering collaboration between government bodies, academia, and civil society.

Londres 38 Espacio de Memorias

Representatives from Londres 38, Espacio de Memorias shared how they have been using the toolkit for specific initiatives since 2024. In particular, they have followed its technical recommendations for georeferencing, which have allowed them to guide their technical work effectively without needing to rely on programmers or specialised teams.





Alberto Hurtado University

An academic from Alberto Hurtado University observed that the toolkit has considerable potential as a teaching resource within higher education, particularly in courses concerned with human rights, archives, digital humanities, and transitional justice.

The discussion highlighted one of the toolkit's principal strengths: its capacity to translate complex technical concepts into language that is accessible to non-specialist audiences. This was considered particularly significant within the social sciences, where discussions concerning digital technologies, documentary archives, and data management frequently remain confined to specialist circles. By presenting these issues in a clear and approachable manner, the toolkit has the potential to broaden participation among students, researchers, and civil society organisations.

National Migration Service and the Human Rights Programme

A researcher from the National Migration Service noted that many public institutions continue to work with documentary collections that remain only partially digitised. This reality inevitably shapes both the technologies that can be adopted and the strategies available for documentary preservation and analysis. Against this background, the toolkit was considered especially valuable for organisations working in contexts where digitisation remains at an early stage. A lawyer from the Human Rights Programme of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights offered reflections on the same issue, i.e., the very limited level of digitisation currently achieved in Chile. She explained that the initial survey undertaken for the National Search Plan identified more than 30,000 documents, of which only approximately one per cent had been digitised. She argued that preserving documentary heritage should not be understood solely as a technical task but also as an act of memory and justice. Digitised records benefit from substantially greater levels of protection, whereas documents that remain exclusively in analogue form are considerably more vulnerable to deterioration, loss, or destruction.

Supreme Court of Chile

A representative of the Supreme Court proposed exploring the possibility of establishing a formal cooperation agreement between the Court and the Plancondor.org team. Such an agreement would provide an institutional framework capable of supporting future collaboration while encouraging reflection on the practical applications of the toolkit within the Chilean judiciary. The representative indicated that the toolkit would be shared with members of the Supreme Court in order to stimulate discussion regarding its institutional relevance, practical implementation, and potential contribution to judicial work.



Recommendations for Revisions and Updates

Participants identified several priorities for future revisions and editions of the toolkit:

- **Improving design**, especially the use of illustrations, diagrams, and visual resources that would enhance comprehension, navigation and facilitate understanding among users from a broad range of backgrounds.

WIKIMEDIA

- **Expanding the toolkit to address disinformation**, including practical guidance on responding to these challenges and how they might affect public understanding of memory, human rights, and transitional justice.

MUSEUM OF MEMORY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- **Adding a new section with Frequently Asked Questions**, considering that some of the key points appear straightforward to software developers but could constitute significant barriers for organisations without specialist technical expertise.

LONDRES 38 ESPACIO DE MEMORIAS

- **Including a clearer explanation of Creative Commons licences**, including their legal implications and the different forms of reuse they permit, to better help explain this to the public.

WIKIMEDIA

- **Complementing the analysis by incorporating a dedicated discussion of artificial intelligence and archives**, opening a space for reflection on the use of these technologies in projects relating to memory, human rights, and transitional justice.

ALBERTO HURTADO UNIVERSITY



List of Recommended Free and Open-Source Software

We share here a series of practical recommendations relating to the free and open-source software whose use we promoted during the afternoon training sessions in Valdivia and Valparaíso. We also include two additional applications developed by sitiosdememoria.uy in 2026.

GIMP — To digitise and edit images. Download from www.gimp.org

NAPS2 — Software to transform scanned images into PDF documents and embedding basic metadata. The application uses Tesseract as OCR engine. Download from <https://www.naps2.com/> and <https://github.com/tesseract-ocr/tesseract>

Drupal —The content management system used by both sitiosdememoria.uy and plancondor.org. Download from <https://new.drupal.org/home>

archive.org — A free online platform for publishing and preserving digitised documentary collections while ensuring long-term public access. Website <https://archive.org/>

Che PDF — A high-performance indexing and document search engine developed by sitiosdememoria.uy. Che PDF was designed to process, analyse, and search the full text of extensive PDF repositories, thereby facilitating research across large documentary collections. Download from <https://sitiosdememoria.uy/nuestro-software>.

Che IMG — An automated image-processing application developed by sitiosdememoria.uy. The software has been specifically designed to reconstruct oversized historical documents, including newspapers, posters, and archival records, that were digitised in multiple sections because of their physical dimensions. It automatically merges the individual scans into a single high- resolution image. Download from <https://sitiosdememoria.uy/nuestro-software>.