

Chile - Balmaceda Macrosettlement



Balmaceda Macrocamp has a total area of approximately **28.0 hectares** and hosts a total of **1,700 families**. Balmaceda Macrocamp is part of 64 camps in Antofagasta, which house more than 7,000 families, most of them immigrants (64%). Many of the camps are located in what the **Communal Regulatory Plan of Antofagasta, after the 1991 alluvium that killed nearly 100 people**, defined as non-building zones given their risk conditions. Apart from the risk of alluvium, many camps are subject to risks due to falling rocks; floods caused by the breakage of water matrices; fires, given the light material and the difficult access roads to the camps; and electrocutions, particularly in the case of Macrocampamento Balmaceda, a large part of which is located within the safety belts of high-voltage transmission lines.

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Given this situation, Michelle Bachelet's government created a special plan for Antofagasta, called the **"Camp Overcoming Plan,"** which sought to "contain" the camp situation by training camp leaders - most of whom are immigrant women - to organize their camps into housing committees, resolve conflicts, control the growth of the camps, among other things. The Overcoming Plan also released emergency funds from the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security **to build transitional neighborhoods where camp dwellers can be resettled in at-risk areas** while enough social housing is being built to start subsidizing immigrants.

Resistance to eviction led these families to file an appeal for protection against the Provincial Government. The remedy of protection accused discriminatory and arbitrary treatment in the eviction process. **A total of 66 families were finally moved to the transitional neighborhood** and now live there with families from other camps as well as families who have never lived in camps.

It should be noted that the villagers refused and continue to refuse to move to the transitional neighborhood. The transitory neighborhood where they were going to be "moved" has very precarious material conditions, since it is located next to the municipal dump in a very distant zone that is not even urbanized, in the sector of La Chimba. Paradoxically, **the transitory neighbourhood is located in an alluvial high-risk area. The houses in the transitional neighborhood are mediaguas, much smaller and more precarious** than many of the homes that the residents built in their camps, and do not have access to potable water or sewage.

Arbitrary evictions led to an appeal for protection filed on behalf of two families from the transitional neighborhood, one Chilean and one Bolivian, against the Provincial Government of Antofagasta on April 3, 2019. Fortunately, on May 10, 2019 the **Court of Appeals of Antofagasta ruled in favor of the two people evicted and against the Provincial Government of Antofagasta** and annulled the eviction orders, which it considered arbitrary given the fact that the families have a loan contract to live in the transitory neighborhood that can be terminated only through due process.

Source : Pablo Seward Delaporte



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