

One Year After the Forced Disappearance of Julia Chuñil, Her Family and Supporters Demand Justice and Remember Her Fight for Native Forests

El Ciudadano · 9 de noviembre de 2025

A year after the forced disappearance of Mapuche defender Julia Chuñil Catricura, her family and communities demand justice. Her granddaughter, Lissette Sánchez, denounces the persecution for protecting a native forest, media criminalization, and the case's impunity, stating that they will not permit her grandmother's years of struggle to be in vain.



Original article: “Cayó una, pero nos levantamos mil en todos los territorios”: Nieta de Julia Chuñil a un año de su desaparición forzada

CHEW MULEY, JULIA CHUÑIL!: A YEAR AFTER HER FORCED DISAPPEARANCE, THE FIGHT FOR NATIVE FORESTS AND THE MEMORY OF THE MAPUCHE DEFENDER PERSISTS

During a heartfelt and resolute speech at a commemorative event, **Lissette Sánchez, granddaughter of Mapuche leader and land defender Julia Chuñil Catricura**, raised her voice to demand truth and justice on the anniversary of her grandmother’s forced disappearance. The case, which has mobilized communities both within and outside the country, highlights the harsh realities of socio-environmental conflict, the persecution of the Mapuche people, and the collusion between economic power and state inaction, as claimed by various communities and organizations.

The video recording of Sánchez's speech was shared by photographer, documentarian, and audiovisual creator Nicole Kramm Caifal, whose access link is included at the end of this report.

The Pain of a Forced Absence

"Today, as everyone knows, marks one year since my grandmother Julia was forcibly disappeared... it is a very sad day for us because we never imagined that my grandmother, who used to be seen working in the fields, a diligent woman, a lover of animals, would not be seen anymore," Sánchez recounted as she traveled from the south to Santiago to represent her family. She expressed that the anguish deepens because "we couldn't even say goodbye to her and tell her how much we loved her."

See also / Demand Truth and Justice: Organizations Protest in Courts One Year After Julia Chuñil Catricura's Forced Disappearance

In front of a Mapuche audience, Sánchez recounted how, after a fruitless month-long search where "firefighters withdrew," she decided to use social media to highlight the injustice. "I shared videos, images, so that everyone would know about my grandmother and the injustice we were experiencing as a family, simply for being Mapuche."

You May Be Interested / Businessman Juan Carlos Morstadt Anwandter has been declared implicated by the Los Ríos Prosecutor's Office in Julia Chuñil Catricura's Forced Disappearance Case

The account reveals the background of the tragedy: the defense of a native forest. "My grandmother was protecting a forest; she was involved in the recovery of nearly a thousand hectares, which contained 90% floral and faunal diversity, medicinal plants, and animals—a very beautiful place." This struggle brought her into conflict with businessman Juan Carlos Morstadt, whom the family identifies as the main perpetrator of threats and harassment against her.

"Many know that my grandmother was receiving threats, harassment... he was the one threatening and harassing her, driven by greed to possess this native forest," Sánchez asserted. "And one day, just like today, she went up, along with her dogs, and that man, driven by greed, took her away."

Media Criminalization and Fabrications

Julia Chuñil's granddaughter made a harsh critique of mainstream media, accusing them of being "mocking press." She denounced that "national channels published the faces and identities of my uncles," exposing them to public scrutiny and re-victimizing the family.

She also questioned the credibility of protected witnesses in the investigation: "We don't know who they are, if they are real people, or if they were created by the same police to make one fabrication

after another.”

“Where we live, our neighbors are pointed at, treated as murderers. How could we harm our grandmother if we loved her so much? National channels also publish notes. Channel 13 spent about four days doing a report, revealing my uncles’ identities and leaving them to public opinion, where people can be so cruel and say horrendous things,” the young Mapuche woman pointed out.

She added: “Let’s not forget the murder of my grandmother’s animals, her little horse and pig, who were part of her life, as she loved her animals as her children. They were also cowardly killed.”

Impunity and a Step Forward in the Case

One incident that she labeled “a lack of respect” was the suspension, just ten minutes before, of the first hearing of the case, to which businessman Morstadt did not show up. “For us, we felt he was guilty,” she expressed.

“Yesterday was supposed to be the first trial. My family was there, along with attorney Karina Riquelme, and many communities supporting the family. And what happened? This businessman didn’t show up, canceled the hearing ten minutes beforehand,” the young woman noted.

However, in a crucial turn of events, Sánchez confirmed during her speech that “today it was confirmed that this businessman is now implicated.” This progress, she maintained, is a triumph of social pressure: “This is thanks to the support of the people, from the communities, both Mapuche and non-Mapuche individuals.”

The Legacy: “One May Fall, but We Rise a Thousand”

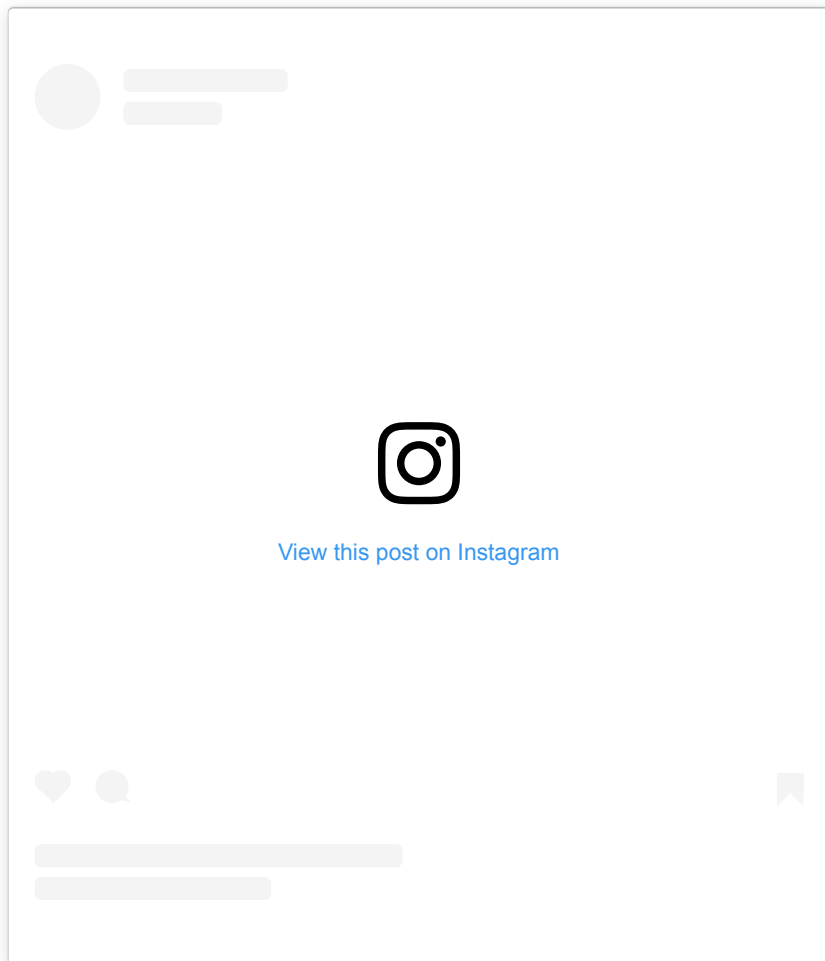
Lisette Sánchez honored her grandmother’s memory not just as a family member but as a seed of resistance. “Not only did they take my grandmother, not only did they murder her, they took years of wisdom, of work, from a woman who loved the land.” She also remembered other Mapuche defenders whose cases remain unsolved, such as Nicolasa Quintremán, Macarena Valdés, and Emilia Bau.

“This person thought that by disappearing her, no one would demand her forest, her whereabouts, but she has risen; **when one falls, a thousand stand up across all territories**,” she declared, announcing the family’s decision to continue the recovery and protection of the forest that Julia defended. **“We will not allow our grandmother’s years of struggle to be in vain.”**

Finally, she sent a message of strength and continuity in the struggle: “And if someday a sister or comrade disappears again, we will rise once more. I come again to raise my voice for my grandmother because they silenced her. But we will continue as a family to raise it again and again.”

The chant “CHEW MULEY, JULIA CHUÑIL!” (Where is Julia Chuñil?) echoed not as a question but as a collective and timeless demand for justice.

Watch the video. Instagram post by Nicole Kramm Caifal



Fuente: [El Ciudadano](#)