

Second Genocide Trial of Guatemala's Former Dictator Rios Montt Underway



Guatemala City, October 18 (RHC)-- Former Guatemalan dictator Efraín Ríos Montt is facing a second trial for genocide, a lawyer for victims said, reviving a case against the man accused of ordering massacres of Maya people during a long civil war. Ríos Montt, who ruled Guatemala in 1982 and 1983 after a military coup, was convicted of genocide four years ago along with another military officer but the ruling was overturned.

A Supreme Court tribunal will hear the case, according to Edgar Pérez, a lawyer for the relatives of victims who have led a years long campaign against Ríos Montt. The 91-year-old retired general was diagnosed with senile dementia in 2015. He will be represented in court by two lawyers and will not make a personal appearance. The lawyers were not immediately available for comment.

The new trial will revisit the earlier accusations that Ríos Montt ordered massacres leading to deaths of at least 1,771 Ixil Mayan people during his 17-month rule. Ríos Montt maintains his innocence, saying junior officers acted without his knowledge.

Guatemala's 1960-1996 civil war led to the deaths of more than 200,000 people and was the bloodiest

among the conflicts seen in Latin America during the era.

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