

More former Chilean intelligence agents sentenced to prison



Santiago de Chile, December 12 (RHC)-- The Court of Appeals of Santiago de Chile has sentenced 36 former agents of the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) for their participation in the forced disappearance of hundreds of opposition leaders during the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

At least 32 former agents of Pinochet's secret police have been sentenced to 10 years and one day in prison for their involvement in the disappearance of hundreds of members of the Communist Party, the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) and activists of the Christian community of Villa Francia de Santiago. All of them are already serving prison sentences for other state crimes.

Former intelligence agents Raul Iturriaga Neumann, Cesar Manriquez Bravo, Miguel Krassnoff Martchenko, and Pedro Espinoza Bravo were sentenced to 15 years and a day in prison after they were identified as the material authors of the torture and murder of three activists. The four retired generals are already fulfilling prison sentences between 600 and 700 years for multiple other crimes.

In 1974, Enrique Toro Romero, Eduardo Lara Petrovich, and Jose Villagra Astudillo were kidnapped, tortured, and murdered by Chile's state security. According to the testimony provided by prisoners who survived the dictatorship, the three men were kept at least two different torture centers. The witnesses lost track of the three prisoners in July 1974.

The three men were left-wing activists and members of the Christian community Villa Francia, a working-class neighborhood in the capital city of Santiago. Their names appeared in files of Operation Colombo, a montage to cover up the disappearance of 119 political prisoners.

The Court also ordered a monetary reparation of \$800,000 for the three victims' next of kin. This past week, at least 68 former Pinochet agents have been sentenced for their role in widespread crimes against humanity in Chile during Pinochet's dictatorship.

According to official data, the military dictatorship was responsible for killing 3,200 Chileans, of which 1,192 remain disappeared, and torturing another 40,000.

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