

Thousands of Argentines Protest Operation Condor-Era Impunity



Buenos Aires, May 11 (RHC)-- Thousands of people filled Argentina's historic Plaza de Mayo on Wednesday evening to reject the Supreme Court's recent controversial ruling against human rights. The law -- known as the "Two for One" -- reduces the sentence of prisoners convicted for dictatorship-era crimes against humanity.

Dozens of social organizations called for the event, including the Grandmothers and Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the Relatives of the Disappeared as well as the Left Front of Workers and the Socialist Movement of Workers.

Chanting the motto: "Judges: Never Again," the human rights activists wore their signature white handkerchiefs and demanded justice for the 30,000 victims who were disappeared and murdered during the country's Dirty War-era dictatorship.

The Dirty War was Argentina's offshoot of Operation Condor, a Cold War-era campaign of violence across Latin America. Through the campaign, which resulted in tens of thousands of activist deaths, the U.S. teamed up with right-wing military dictatorships to extinguish leftist movements.

Argentina's lower house of Congress approved a bill to sanction the Supreme Court decision to apply the "Two for One" law, passing the proposal to the Senate for discussion Wednesday. The approval came as organizations were set to take to the streets in large protests against the incendiary ruling.

After six hours of debate, lower house lawmakers passed the resolution, with one vote against it and 43 absences, in an attempt to stop the negative backlash it has sparked so far.

The lower house approved text to specify that the law "is not applicable to criminal conduct that falls into the category of crimes against humanity, genocide or war crimes, according to domestic or international rights."

The Supreme Court applied the measure to the case of Luis Muiña, who in 2011 was sentenced to 13 years in prison for being a "co-perpetrator of the crime of illegal deprivation of liberty and torture" in five cases. This marked the first time it had been invoked in a case of crimes against humanity, as in the past only common criminals had benefited from the measure.

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