

*Chile convicts retired military
officers responsible for torture
and murder of Víctor Jara*



Santiago de Chile, August 29 (Prensa Latina)-- The Chilean Supreme Court has convicted seven retired military officers for the crimes of aggravated kidnapping, torture and murder of the renowned singer-songwriter Víctor Jara, as well as Litré Quiroga, former director of prisons.

Former officers Raúl Jofré González, Edwin Bianchi, Nelson Haase, Ernerto Wulf, Juan Jara Quintana, Ernesto Bethke and Hernán Cachón were each sentenced to 15 years in prison for committing both

murders. They were also sentenced to another 10 years in prison for the kidnapping of the two victims.

In addition, former military prosecutor Rolando Melo Silva will spend eight years in prison as an accessory to the murders and illegal detentions.

Víctor Jara, one of the greatest representatives of Chilean trova, actor and professor, was arrested along with hundreds of people at the Universidad Técnica del Estado, today the Universidad de Santiago de Chile, the day after the coup against President Salvador Allende.

They were taken to the soccer stadium where a henchman identified the artist, who was subjected to cruel torture for three days and then killed with 44 bullets.

In the early morning hours of September 16, 1973, his body was discovered by some villagers in the vicinity of the Metropolitan Cemetery.

Litré Quiroga was the National Director of Prisons when the coup d'état occurred and he suspended a medical leave he was on, went to his office, sent most of his staff home and communicated with the army to protest the coup.

Shortly after, his office was raided and he was transferred to Armored Regiment number two and on September 13 to the Chile Stadium where he was tortured by the military. His body was found next to Jara's and that of three other people.

Prosecuting attorney Nelson Caucoto, who represented the two families in the case, pointed out that the final and definitive sentence was handed down by the highest court in the crimes committed by the Chilean military against two important figures of the country.

He added that Víctor Jara was "an icon of the cultural and musical firmament of our country, and the other an exemplary public servant. Both were cowardly tortured to satiety and riddled with dozens of bullets.

The sentence comes only days before the 50th anniversary of the crimes were perpetrated.

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