

Ecuador Set to Commemorate Restrepo Case



Quito, January 8 (RHC-teleSUR) -- Ecuadorans are set to mark the 27 year anniversary Thursday of the infamous Restrepo case that led to revelations of widespread police abuse in the country, including torture and murder, in the 1980s.

Teenage brothers Carlos Santiago and Pedro Restrepo were driving to Quito's airport when they went missing on Jan. 8, 1988. Police initially suggested the pair had run away from home, or were involved in a car accident.

However, since an international commission was launched in 1991, officers from the now dissolved National Police Criminal Investigative Service (SIC) have been implicated in their disappearances.

Police are now believed to have stopped the brothers and searched their vehicle. Details of what happened next remain hazy, though the commission concluded the brothers were tortured and eventually murdered by SIC agents.

A former SIC agent admitted to helping others dump the brothers' bodies in a nearby lake. Several SIC officers were convicted of the killings in 1995, while the SIC was dismantled amid allegations that the murders were just the tip of the iceberg of systemic human rights abuses.

Despite years of investigation, the bodies of the Restrepo brothers have never been recovered. The latest search of the lake where they were believed to have been dumped was conducted in 2009, though no bodies were recovered.

Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa has vowed to ensure such disappearances never take place again, while he has been credited with overseeing a government divorced from the repression of the 1980s.

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