

22 Year Sentence Sought for Colombian Death Squad Head in US



Bogota, April 08 (teleSUR-RHC) The U.S. prosecutor in the case against former Colombian paramilitary Salvatore Mancuso is seeking a 22-year sentence for the former AUC leader, Colombian media reported on Monday.

Mancuso was convicted by Colombian authorities of crimes against humanity, including torture, forced disappearances, homicide, and gender-based violence. The United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, (AUC for its Spanish acronym), which Mancuso helped found, is believed to be responsible for the deaths of some 11,000 people and the forced displacement of tens of thousands. Despite the scale of atrocities committed by his group, Mancuso benefited from a special law approved during the presidency of Alvaro Uribe that saw his sentence reduced to a mere 8 years. The former paramilitary chief was extradited to the United States in 2008 to face trial for his activities in connection to drug trafficking to the United States. Mancuso pled not guilty and his trial was held behind closed doors, with many of the legal documents pertaining to his case also having been sealed.

Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo* obtained the document prepared by the U.S. prosecutor in his case which argues Mancuso should be jailed for 22 years due to his position as the second-in-command of the AUC.

The prosecutor added that a 22-year sentence is in keeping with other sentences issued against drug traffickers, such as Diego Murillo Bejarano and Carlos Jimenez Naranjo who received 31 and 33 years in prison respectively.

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