

Two Argentinian Grandmothers End their Long Search



Buenos Aires, September 1 (RHC)-- The headquarters of the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo once again became a place of joy and celebration on Monday as the iconic human rights group announced that yet another child who was snatched from their parents during the country's military dictatorship had been identified, according to Buenos Aires Herald.

The name of the woman who is now the 117th grandchild to be identified as the descendant of disappeared parents remains a mystery, but she now knows her true origins — and that's precisely what dozens of human rights activists celebrated.

No one seemed happier than María Assof de Domínguez and Angelina Catterino, the two grandmothers of the newly identified grandchild, the person they had been seeking for years. As Grandmothers leader Estela Barnes de Carlotto spoke, the two held up photographs of their disappeared children, who conceived a baby born in Mendoza in 1978, when she was quickly snatched from her mother's arms while she was illegally imprisoned.

"We have waited for this day for years," said Catterino, who was too emotional to say much else before a throng of media that had gathered to celebrate the news.

Assof, for her part, remembered how the two often took to the streets to look for their granddaughter, whom, as of last night, they had yet to meet.

“We were just housewives,” Assof said as tears streamed down her cheeks. “I was forced to come to Buenos Aires for the first time in my life to look for my son.”

The decades-long search of these two grandmothers ended on Thursday, when the National Genetic Database (BNDG) reported the daughter of Walter Hernán Domínguez and Gladys Cristina Castro had been identified. And this identification happened not because she had approached the institution with doubts about her identity, as is usually the case, but thanks to the efforts of the National Commission for the Right to Identity (Conadi), which is under the supervision of Human Rights Secretary Martín Fresneda.

The long road to identity began in 1994, when the Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights (MEDH) received a report indicating that a baby had mysteriously appeared in the home of a couple in Mendoza at the height of the dictatorship. The case reached the Grandmothers, who then sent the report to the Conadi.

There was a time when the Conadi only investigated once a person actually approached the institution. But starting last year, the government agency began investigating these types of reports as well. The Conadi contacted the woman in February and she agreed to provide a DNA sample in order to determine whether she was the daughter of forcibly disappeared parents. The test was conducted on July 16.

That follows the pattern of the three most recent grandchildren to recover their identity — Ignacio Montoya Carlotto, Ana Libertad Baratti de la Cuadra and Jorge Castro Rubel. They had all been raised by civilians, some without any evident ties to the military.

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