

Ex-Military Leaders in Guatemala Indicted for Crimes Against Humanity



Guatemala City, January 7 (RHC)-- In Guatemala, police have arrested and indicted 18 ex-military leaders on charges of committing crimes against humanity during the decades-long, U.S.-backed dirty war against Guatemala's indigenous communities.

The ex-military leaders face charges of ordering massacres and forced disappearances during the conflict, which led to more than a quarter-million deaths.

Many of the arrested former military leaders were backed by the United States, including Manuel Benedicto Lucas García, a former army chief of staff and the brother of ex-President Romeo Lucas.

García had worked closely with U.S. military officials to develop a system of warfare in the highlands against Guatemala's indigenous Mayan communities, which involved decapitating and crucifying people.

Guatemalan prosecutors also moved to have the immunity lifted for Édgar Justino Ovalle Maldonado, an ex-military leader who is now the right-hand man of incoming President Jimmy Morales.

The arrests come six months after massive popular uprisings against a corruption scandal ousted the now-jailed former President Otto Pérez Molina, who was also formerly a U.S.-backed military leader during the country's dirty wars.

In other news, acting Guatemalan President Alejandro Maldonado made a surprise announcement he was slashing the minimum wage for the manufacturing industry in certain areas. Video of the announcement shows acting President Maldonado appearing to break down in the face of opposition, waving his arms and shouting at the protesters, calling them "Leninists" and "bums."

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