

Former Guatemalan Officers on Trial for Crimes of Sexual Slavery in 1980s



Guatemala City, February 2 (RHC)-- In Guatemala, two former military officers are on trial for crimes of sexual and domestic slavery and forced disappearance perpetrated against indigenous Mayan women in 1982 during the U.S.-backed dirty wars.

A 1999 U.N.-backed Truth Commission report found that the Guatemalan military systematically used rape as a weapon of terror during the decades-long war, but this is the first time any individual officers have faced trial related to these crimes.

The trial, which opened Monday, comes after decades of organizing by the defendants, who say that they were forced into sexual slavery for months in the small village of Sepur Zarco in eastern Guatemala. They say they were required to report for 12-hour shifts, during which soldiers forced them to clean, cook and submit to routine gang rapes. The defendants are now in their seventies and eighties.

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