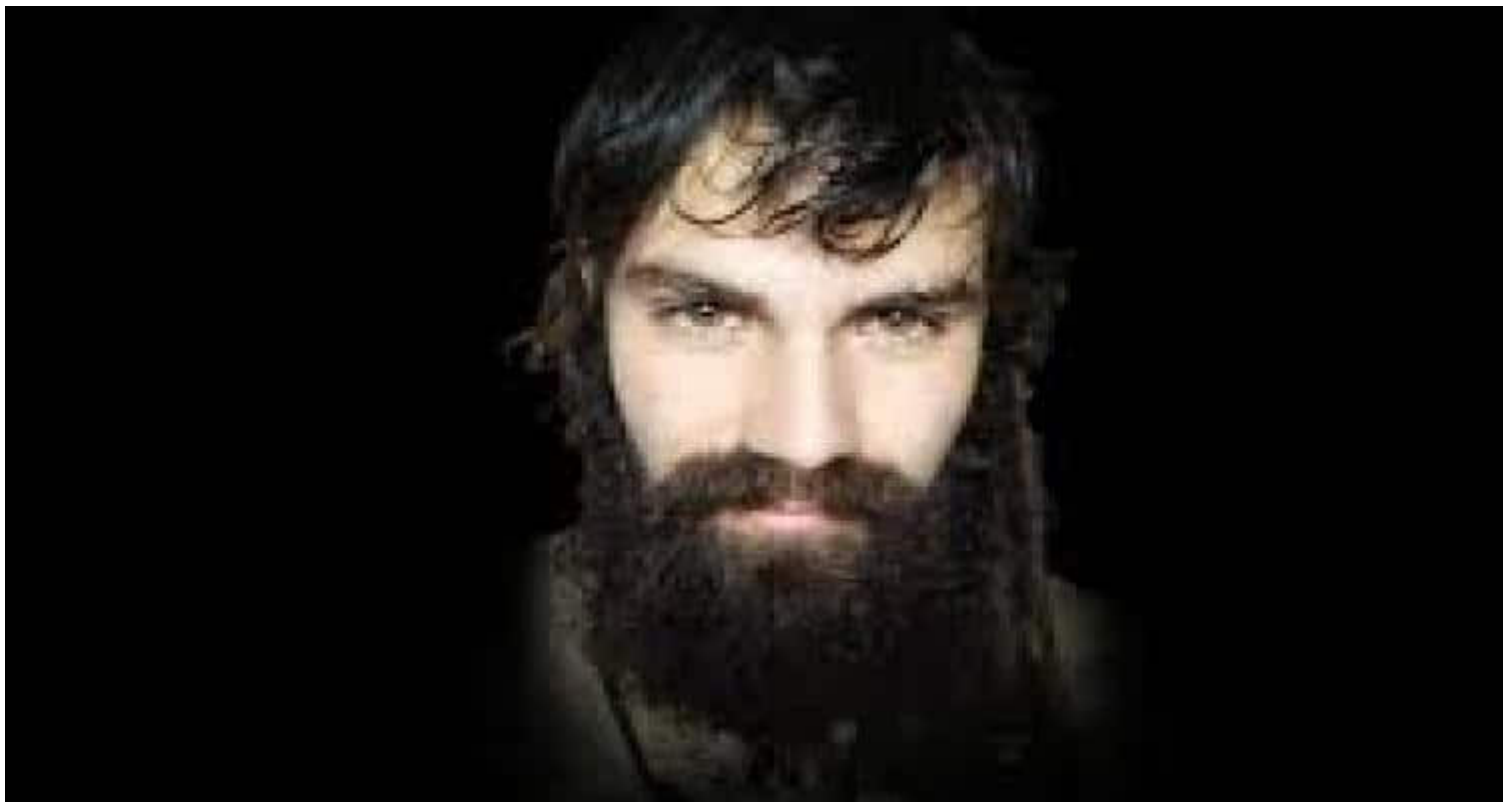


# *Maldonado Family Asks UN Experts to Join Investigation*

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Buenos Aires, October 30 (RHC)-- In Argentina, the family of Santiago Maldonado has met with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, IACHR, in the Legislative Palace of Montevideo, Uruguay. The family requested that international experts be sent to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to investigate the arrest and death of Santiago, because they said that they do not trust the Argentinean government.

"This trip happened because we understand that the Commission must join the family to find truth and justice," said Maldonado family lawyer Veronica Heredia at a press conference. "Today an impartial, independent, prompt investigation is at stake," he added.

"That is why we came to ask the IACHR, since the government did not comply with the precautionary measure, which was to protect the life and integrity of the rights of Santiago, that a proper investigation be carried out," said Heredia, adding that "the Argentine national police are responsible for a new policy of forced disappearance in the country. "

The lawyer denounced the role of the media in the case. "We are facing a new form of forced disappearance in Argentina that is premeditated. The media reproduce and magnify the claims of the government." Sergio Maldonado, the brother of Santiago, stressed the importance of sending UN experts to assist in the investigation.

When asked if they had tried to meet with Argentine President Mauricio Macri, Sergio replied that "the President did communicate inopportunistically on Friday, the day the DNA results came back identifying the body of Santiago." Sergio accused the president of offering condolences to the family to electioneer in the Argentine elections.

The meeting in Uruguay was attended by Sergio Maldonado, his wife Andrea Antico and family lawyer, Veronica Heredia, together with the Uruguayan Vice President Lucia Topolansky. On behalf of the Government of Mauricio Macri, Claudio Avruj, Secretary of Human Rights and Cultural Pluralism of Argentina, was in attendance alongside officials from the Ministry of Justice and lawyers from the Human Rights Secretariat and the Ministry of Security.

Sergio Maldonado said that Uruguay's Vice President Lucia Topolansky gave the family her support, making herself available for the family's needs. Likewise, leaders of former President Jose "Pepe" Mujica's party, the "Broad Front" that governs Uruguay, joined the campaign for the Maldonado case.

On the outskirts of the Legislative Palace and during the meeting, dozens of people gathered with banners of support for the case, some depicting images of Santiago Maldonado. On August 22, the IACHR had granted a precautionary measure for the protection of the rights to life and personal integrity of Maldonado, who had been missing for more than 20 days.

The young activist and craftsman was last seen on August 1 in the Chubut River area - where his body was found last week - while participating in a protest in support of the Mapuche people which was violently suppressed by the national police.

The case, which is being investigated as a "forced disappearance," is headed by Judge Gustavo Lleral, who awaits the results of studies on the autopsy to move forward in the judicial process, the judge said.

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