

Chilean Court Acquits 68 People Linked to Dictatorship Crimes



Santiago de Chile, December 29 (RHC)-- A Chilean court has acquitted 68 of 75 people convicted for kidnapping and disappearing Maria Angelica Andreoli, a nutrition and diet student, on August 6, 1974.

The crime against member of the Revolutionary Left Movement, MIR, formed part of the Colombo Operation, a strategy planned by the National Intelligence Directorate, former dictator Augusto Pinochet's secret police, to cover up the forced disappearance of 119 people.

The unanimous decision made by the Court of Appeals — which includes justices Marisol Rojas and Elsa Barrientos as well as attorney Hector Mery — was based on "the inability to attribute them with any function for the arrest or imprisonment of Andreoli." The other seven accused who were convicted include Pedro Espinoza, Miguel Krassnoff and Raul Iturriaga (each sentenced with 13 years), Cesar Manriquez (10 years) and Nelson Paz, Jose Enrique Fuentes and Osvaldo Pulgar (seven to 10 years).

All of them are currently in prison for other crimes.

After being taken from her house, 27-year-old Maria Angelica was transferred to the London 38 detention center, where she was interrogated, tortured and raped. "I was an eyewitness to the interrogation and she was consecutively raped by one and then another one of her captors while they asked her for something she said was on her nightstand," said Roman Barcelo, one of her comrades.

"After returning empty handed, they interrogated her again and insulted her because, according to them,

she had 'fooled them,'" Barcelo told the court. He added that it was Osvaldo Romo (a sadistic torturer who died in 2007 due to an illness) who ended her life.

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