

Argentinean corporal reveals 4,000 thrown into sea alive during military dictatorship



Buenos Aires, June 1 (RHC)-- In Argentina, shocking testimony from a witness and former army colonel during the country's 'dirty war' was revealed during a court session in Buenos Aires.

In a video conference call from Neuquen, Argentina, Nelson Ramon Gonzalez retold the stories of dozens of kidnappings, incidents of torture and forced disappearances between 1979 and 1980 conducted during the nation's bloody dictatorship.

The army corporal confirmed that the Campo de Mayo military base was used as a clandestine detention center for people involved in the "counter-offensive" resisting the dictatorship, and which during the conflict, he recounted, were boarded onto planes by the thousands and thrown into the sea.

"About four thousand people passed through (Campo de Mayo) and then were thrown into the sea alive," said Gonzalez. "It was known throughout Campo de Mayo. There were the Fiat planes and the flights left from there. It was common knowledge," he said.

In regards to the assassinations of Federico Frias and Marcos "Pato" Zucker (actor Marcos Zucker's son), he confirmed they were killed at the base's shooting range by some army officers. The bodies, along with several other still unidentified individuals, were then burned.

"Gonzalez's testimony is very important because it puts on the judicial scene something that has not been judicialized so far and, at the same time, contributes to understanding the central nerve of repression throughout Argentina," said Pablo Llonto, a plaintiff lawyer in the trial.

Gonzalez was one of eight soldiers stationed on a two-month rotation at the base under the watchful eye of intelligence agencies like the 601 Intelligence Battalion. "We know that this will illustrate the organizational chart in order to understand that the intelligence was not only there to obtain information under torture, but also to organize counterintelligence, generate simulated news and circulate them in the media," Llonto said.

The corporal's testimony will serve to begin thinking of the movement in a much broader sense in relation to resistance to the dictatorship ... This giant web of disinformation that covered the country for so long is beginning to be discovered," he said.

Since the trial began in April, over 250 witnesses have come forward and nine former military officials and intelligence officers have been linked to crimes against humanity and charged on 94 counts.

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