

Guatemala convicts former soldiers of raping Indigenous women in 1980s

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Guatemala City, January 25 (RHC)-- In Guatemala, five former paramilitary soldiers have been convicted of crimes against humanity and sentenced to decades in prison for sexually assaulting dozens of Indigenous Achí women in the 1980s.

The historic ruling comes after years of advocacy by survivors and supporters. The women weren't able to file criminal complaints of the atrocities until 2011. It then took over a decade for the former members of the so-called Civil Self-Defense Patrol to stand trial earlier this month.

The patrol was made up of several armed groups, recruited by Guatemala's U.S.-backed army. Survivors said the soldiers rounded up all the men in their village and disappeared them before raping and assaulting the women. One of the survivors who testified at the trial was only 12 years old when she was raped by Guatemalan military.

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