

Ex-Guatemalan army colonel sentenced to 20 years for 1982 Indigenous massacre

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Guatemala City, August 28 (RHC)-- In Guatemala, a former military colonel has been convicted of crimes against humanity for his involvement in the killing of over two dozen Indigenous people in 1982. Juan Ovalle Salazar was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

The massacre of 25 Maya Achi people, most of them children, took place during some of the bloodiest years of Guatemala's U.S.-funded war and came under the ruling of U.S.-backed military dictator Efraín Ríos Montt. Eight former members of the Guatemalan armed forces were acquitted.

Rights activists continue to demand justice. One organizer, Miguel Itzep, said: "We want those responsible for the massacre of our brothers in Rancho Bejuco in Baja Verapaz to be sentenced by the judges. As we have always said, as long as there is no justice in Guatemala, peace cannot be built."

Ríos Montt was convicted of genocide in a historic 2013 trial. That ruling was later overturned by a higher court.

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