

Truth Report Investigating 1989 U.S. Invasion of Panama Warms Up



Panama City, January 27 (RHC-teleSUR) -- Panama has begun to take preliminary steps to support the launch of a truth commission process investigating the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama.

Panama's Foreign Ministry and United Nations representatives hosted a workshop Tuesday for civil society delegates to discuss the development and institutional tools of the truth commission that will seek to publish a "truth report on the invasion.

"For the first time after 26 years there is a government commitment to clarifying the facts related to the Dec. 20, 1989 invasion," stated the Foreign Ministry about the commission, according to Panama's La Prensa.

The commission will aim to identify the victims and reclaim collective memory around the invasion in the name of establishing truth more than 26 years later. The investigation is expected to pave the way for reparations to be paid to families of the victims and for the history to be honored in school curricula and public monuments.

“This history of the country cannot be erased,” stated the proposal for the truth commission, launched on the 26th anniversary of the invasion last month. “Dec. 20 should be a day of national mourning to remember the people who died so that future generations know the historic facts regarding the U.S. invasion of Panama.”

On December 20, 1989, over 27,000 U.S. soldiers invaded Panama as part of President George H.W. Bush’s “Operation Just Cause.” The invasion was allegedly aimed to carry out the arrest of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega on alleged drug trafficking charges. Noriega was formerly a close U.S. ally and CIA informant aiding U.S. counterinsurgency operations in the region.

However, the invasion, which came after failed coup attempts and economic sanctions in the wake of Noriega falling out of Washington’s favor, is widely interpreted as part of U.S. efforts to maintain a supportive government in Panama and U.S. hegemony in the region.

The brutal military operation resulted in at least 3,000 civilian and military victims. Many of the bodies remained unidentified after being burnt and piled up in the streets.

The U.S. has never compensated the survivors impacted in the invasion or the families of the victims.

Panama had a separate truth commission that investigated abuses committed under the military dictatorships of Generals Omar Torrijos and Manuel Noriega between 1968 and 1989, which found that the regimes were guilty of torture and “cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment” of victims.

The commission will produce Panama’s first “truth report” specifically focused on the 1989 invasion.

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