

Rights Action – July 27, 2011
Guatemala – A Crack in the Wall of Impunity & War Crimes

THE DOS ERRES MASSACRE TRIAL ADVANCES

29 years after the 1982 brutal massacre of hundreds of campesinos, a trial began in Guatemala City against four of the material authors of that atrocity.

While it is notable that this trial is against the “material” authors of Guatemala’s genocide and campaign of massacres, not against the “intellectual” authors, this Dos Erres trial is an important step forward, none the less.

Rights Action honors and commends the work of FAMDEGUA (Family Members of the Disappeared in Guatemala) that, since the exhumation of the Dos Erres massacre site in 1995, has been at the forefront of effort to demand truth, memory and justice for this and other massacres and crimes against humanity.

NO LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

This trial does not signify the end of impunity. Not even close.

Even as this one massacre trial advances (in a country where over 600 massacres were committed), the leading candidate for Presidential elections in September 2011 is General Otto Perez Molina, one of the intellectual authors of Guatemala’s genocide and massacre campaign against its own civilian population.

Even as a small number of trials proceed against a few “material” authors of the crimes of the past, the “intellectual” authors not only continue to live free from justice today, protected by impunity, but also many of them are among the economic elites and occupy the highest political offices in the country.

WHAT TO DO: see below.

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GUATEMALA TRIES SOLDIERS ON MASSACRE CHARGES

AlJazeera.net, July 26, 2011

The defendants, three of whom had been members of an elite security force known as “kaibiles”, pleaded innocent on Monday in a Guatemala City court to killing 201 men, women and children, in the village of Dos Erres [in 1982].

Daniel Martinez, Carlos Carias, Manuel Pop and Reyes Collin said they were not in the village and were stationed elsewhere the day it was stormed by government troops who killed at least 250 people in total there, according to court filings. "That day, at 5pm, people arrived to tell me that there had been a problem [in Dos Erres], and since it was not my jurisdiction I couldn't help them," said Carias, who was second lieutenant at the time in command of an area 10km from Dos Erres. "I directed them to other villages to seek help."

RAPING AND KILLING

During the atrocity, the soldiers allegedly raped and killed women and young girls, among others, and threw the bodies of victims down a well. Dozens of bodies were exhumed from the well in the 1990s and the remains from 171 victims were recovered in total. At least 67 children under the age of 12 were among the dead.

Prosecutors say soldiers entered Dos Erres in 1982 looking for missing weapons that guerilla groups operating in the region had stolen from the soldiers days earlier. They did not find the weapons but accused farmers in the village of collaborating with the rebels.

Witnesses say villagers were tortured and robbed by the soldiers as part of a "scorched earth" campaign to eliminate communities supporting opposition groups at the height of Guatemala's longest civil war in history.

'HUNGRY FOR MEAT'

Cesar Ibanez, one of the witnesses, testified in the court proceeding that one soldier had sliced off a piece of flesh from a wounded villager's rib after his superior had told the soldier he was "hungry for meat".

From 1960 to 1996, more than 200,000 people were killed or disappeared as a military dictatorship fought to quell a popular uprising across the country, according to UN figures. Entire villages were exterminated in the conflict.

This is Guatemala's second massacre trial related to the civil war. The first trial ended in a 2004 guilty verdict against an officer and 13 soldiers, but the verdict was overturned on appeal.

Also on Monday, a judge announced that a former National Police official has been accused of carrying out an enforced disappearance during the civil war and was jailed Sunday night. Former chief of the 6th Commando, Pedro Garcia Arredondo, is accused in the disappearance of Edgar Saenz, Judge Veronica Galicia said.

EX-KAIBIL NARRA EN TRIBUNAL CÓMO EJECUTARON A VÍCTIMAS

<http://www.asociacioncomunicarte.blogspot.com/>

POR HUGO ALVARADO

El ex-kaibil César García Tobar narró ayer en el Tribunal Primero A de Alto Riesgo la forma en que fueron masacrados 201 campesinos —entre hombres, mujeres y niños— en el parcelamiento Dos Erres, Petén, en 1982.

Su relato se dio a través de una videoconferencia desde México, en el comienzo del juicio contra cuatro ex subinspectores de la Escuela de Kaibiles. En su testimonio, García Tobar explicó que la operación empezó a las 2 horas del 7 de diciembre del referido año.

Según él, los hombres fueron llevados a la escuela de la localidad, y las mujeres y niños, reunidos en la iglesia evangélica. Luego les vendaron los ojos, y los primeros en morir fueron los menores.

García Tobar indicó que los pequeños fueron muertos con una almágana, con la cual les pegaban en la cabeza. Después fue el turno de los hombres y las mujeres. La mayoría fueron lanzados en un pozo.

Una vez en el fondo, les dispararon con fusil y les lanzaron granadas de fragmentación, para asegurar su muerte. Antes, las mujeres fueron violadas. De acuerdo con el relato, antes de matarlas las obligaron a servirle el almuerzo al pelotón de 40 kaibiles que ejecutó la orden mortal.

García Tobar aseguró que a otros campesinos los ametrallaron y sus cuerpos quedaron dispersos en el parcelamiento. Contó que uno de los oficiales le dijo a un kaibil que tenía hambre y ganas de carne.

“Le dijo que a una persona le quitara un trozo de carne en la parte de las costillas. El soldado lo hizo, y al entregárselo, el oficial le contestó: ‘Era una broma’. El exkaibil le dijo que el hombre estaba moribundo. ‘Entonces matalo’, le ordenó el oficial”, expresó García Tobar.

“Quiero decir la verdad. Los familiares tienen derecho a saber la verdad. Lo que realmente pasó”, aseveró desde México.

BUSCABAN LOS FUSILES

La investigación del Ministerio Público refiere que el Ejército ordenó incursionar en el parcelamiento Dos Erres porque en octubre de ese año —1982— las fuerzas armadas perdieron 40 fusiles, en apariencia, a manos de la guerrilla.

SE DECLARAN INOCENTES

En el debate de ayer, los acusados, el teniente Carlos Carías, Manuel Pop, Reyes Collin Gualip y Daniel Martínez Hernández, se declararon inocentes. Todos son acusados de asesinato y deberes contra la humanidad. Carías también es juzgado por hurto agravado, debido a que se habría robado las pertenencias de los campesinos cuando salió del parcelamiento.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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