

Rights Action
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**Guilty in Guatemala - The January 31, 1980, Spanish Embassy Massacre:
This is how long a measure of justice takes in Guatemala**

A Guatemalan court has found former police chief Pedro García Arredondo responsible for the killings of 37 campesino and student activists after Garcia Arredondo ordered the burning of the Spanish Embassy in Guatemala City, that was peacefully occupied by the campesinos and students in protest of U.S.-backed military regime repression that had reached genocidal proportions. One of the victims was Vicente Menchú, father of Rigoberta Menchú, who won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Below:

- Telesur news article
- Democracy Now interview with Rigoberta Menchú and filmmaker Pamela Yates

More information: see below

**Justice Is Finally Served For The Victims Of A Massacre At The Spanish Embassy
In Guatemala 35 Years Ago**

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Guatemalan-Court-Sentences-Ex-Police-Chief-for-Murdering-37-20150119-0043.html>



(@ Telesur. Rigoberta Menchu testifies in court, as guilty former Police Chief, on right, listens.)

A Guatemalan court found Pedro Garcia Arredondo guilty of murder, attempted murder, and crimes against humanity Monday for the massacre of 37 people at the Spanish embassy in Guatemala 35 years ago, EFE reports. Garcia Arredondo, 69, is responsible for burning the victims of the massacre to death on Jan. 31, 1980, found the court after four months of hearings.

The tribunal outcome confirmed the long-held suspicions in the country that the fire was the result of a “clandestine police operation” and that the participants “prevented the Red Cross, emergency services, and journalists from entering” the building.

The former police chief was still trying to declare his innocence, but Judge Sara Yoc Yoc ruled that he gave the orders to burn down the embassy. According to her ruling, Garcia Arredondo “used the media to confirm the deaths of those inside the embassy.”

The security forces of Guatemala's military regime at the time attacked the Spanish embassy after rural workers and students occupied it in protest to the dictatorship.

Among the 37 burned to death was Spanish Consul Jaime Ruiz del Arbol Soler and Vicente Menchu and Francisco Tum, the father and cousin, respectively, of 1992 Nobel Prize Winner Rigoberta Menchu. Menchu gave the first testimony against Garcia Arredondo in the case.

Just two people survived the fire, including the Spanish ambassador. The other, Guatemalan farmer Gregorio Yuja, subsequently disappeared and his body was found with evidence of torture three days after the fire in the rectory of the State University of San Carlos of Guatemala. Yuja has since become a symbol of the left-wing student movement.

Garcia Arredondo was first arrested in 2011 over the forced disappearance of a university student, also in 1980. He is three years into a 70 year sentence for that crime.

Prosecuting Guatemala's Dirty War:

Rigoberta Menchú Hails Embassy Fire Verdict, Dictator's Trial

http://www.democracynow.org/2015/1/20/prosecuting_guatemalas_dirty_war_rigoberta_menchu

One of the victims massacre was Vicente Menchú, an indigenous peasant leader and father of Rigoberta Menchú, who later won the Nobel Peace Prize. Rigoberta Menchú joins us from Guatemala City to discuss the historic verdict. We are also joined by filmmaker Pamela Yates, who is finishing the third documentary in her trilogy about Guatemala's internal armed conflict. It looks at how the genocide trial of former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt trial empowered Guatemala's nonviolent resistance movements.

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- Daily News: Start viewing, reading regularly: www.democracynow.org / www.upsidedownworld.org / www.dominionpaper.ca / www.rabble.ca /

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