

## MILITARY DIARY CASE



On the eighth day of the intermediate stage, the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) continued with the presentation of the means of conviction against Augusto Vásquez Echeverría, accused of crimes against humanity for extrajudicial execution, and forced disappearance of victims who were taken the Military Zone No. 3 in Comalapa, Chimaltenango. Later that day the court proceeded to hear the means of conviction against Marco Antonio González Taracena, who is identified in declassified documents held within the National Security Archives (NSA) and the Guatemalan National Police Historical Archive (AHPN) as head of Intelligence of the Presidency until May 1985.

### COMMANDER OF THE MILITARY ZONE

The MP summarized the operations exposed the previous day in which Vásquez Echeverría was involved and continued to present more proof. Vásquez Echeverría was the commander of the Chimaltenango Military Zone, implicating him in crimes against humanity against six people registered in the Military Diary whose remains were found in the former Military Detachment of Quetzaltenango along with more than 200 human remains. He is also accused of the forced disappearance of those who, according to the Military Diary, were sent to Chimaltenango during his tenure at those facilities.



He is also accused of the forced disappearance of 14 people: Patricia Yool Osorio, no. 95; Fabian Estrada Satuy and/or Flaviano Estrada Sutuj, no. 96; Visitación Baxcaj Pineda, no. 97; Adriana Chocoj Culajay, no. 98; and Narcisa Cusanero Xian, no. 99; all arrested-disappeared on March 14, 1984, in the operation carried out in the place known as "the People's Prison". In addition, María Zoe Oreno Armira, no. 100;

Brígido Xajil Hernández, no. 101; Joaquín Simón Miza, no. 102; Mario Oreno Armira, members of FAR, arrested in March 1984. Vásquez Echeverría is accused of the forced disappearance of several minors: María Quirina Armira López, 16 years old, no. 94; Juan Pablo Armira López, 12 years old, no. 86; Rolando Yool Cusanero, 5 years old and Irma Yool Cusanero, 3 years old, who are still missing.

"To date they remain disappeared, we do not know anything about them, nor about their children," the prosecutor read in a statement from a relative of Patricio Yool in which she refers to the massacres committed in the region. Narcisa, her children, and sister took refuge in the mountains after the massacres in Chimaltenango.

"About 7 or 8 days after the disappearance of Juan Pablo, some uniformed men in a Jeep came to their home, entered, and told Quirina to pack a change of clothes; they told me that they were taking her to ask her some questions, but she did not return either," says the mother of the Armira López siblings.

In a statement made by Luis Armira López, the brother of Juan Pablo and María Quirina, he recalls that the day his sister was taken away, days after his brother Juan Pablo disappeared, men in uniform arrived in a white van, with the instruction to take her away.

Several entries of the victims recorded in the Military Diary include the annotation of "were sent" to Military Zones of Cobán, Quetzaltenango, and Mazatenango, with the aim of being exploited as sources of information of intelligence value in the region to which they were transferred.

The Prosecutor's Office accuses Vásquez Echeverría of forced disappearance and crimes against humanity in the form of extrajudicial execution by receiving, retaining, and hiding people considered internal enemies incorporated into the network of forced disappearances.

### The Chief Archivist



Subsequently, the Prosecutor's Office began the presentation of the means of conviction against Marco Antonio González Taracena. This evidence includes declassified documents from the National Security Archives (NSA) and the Guatemalan National Police Historical Archive (AHPN) which identify him as the head of the Presidential General Staff from August 10th, 1983 to May 31st, 1985.

He is accused of having participated in and having directed the following operations: September 8th, 1983, October 10th and 11th, 1983, November 2nd to

7th, 1983, November 16th, 1983, November 28th, 1983, January 2nd, 1984, February 22nd to 26th, 1984, March 11th to 13th, 1984, and September 8th, 1983.

The MP explained that the **clandestine intelligence cycle** was based on operations of monitoring, surveillance, detention, torture, and illegal searches. Like a cascade or mosaic effect, the capture of a person entailed the subsequent capture and torture of others.

On September 8th, 1983, according to witnesses under protection, the defendant was a senior officer and head of the captors of Myra Jeannete Meza Soberanis in the clandestine detention center where her brother, Gustavo Adolfo, no. 3, was also located. Myra Jeannete and Gustavo are the aunt and father of the complainant Eliza Meza.

The Prosecutor's Office relates the files registered in the Military Diary as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 with the Meza Soberanis brothers. Teresa Graciela is identified as "responsible for a military structure", and according to the MP, she worked with Gustavo Adolfo Meza Soberanis, Rosa María Castillo Samayoa, Rodrigo Morales, and César Augusto Ovalle Villatoro. This demonstrates the intelligence cycle, which was based on torture, interrogations, and the escalating detentions of individuals classified as internal enemies.

González Taracena is also accused of ordering raids on the homes of Héctor Rolando Valdez Guzmán, no. 12, and Juan Matías Palacios, no. 11, related to no. 10, Carlos Humberto Quinteros García, who is known as "El Hombre Lobo" and who delivered "two houses" in Villa Nueva. The expert archival report provides a confidential document of the Fifth Corps of the National Police, reporting the support it provided to members of the Presidential General Staff in the municipality of Villa Nueva for the raids. This operation is not only evidence of the captures but also the occupation of these residences for an extended period by members of the clandestine and illegal structures. This is also corroborated by newspaper reports and documents of the AHPN.

As for the operation from November 2nd to 7th, 1983, the witness Blandemiro Orozco y Orozco who was arrested during those dates identifies the captors as members of the structure directed by González Taracena. In his statement, Orozco y Orozco narrates: "The kidnappers asked me: 'Do you know who we are?' then they told me, 'You're talking to Military Intelligence.'" The witness was able to recognize a photograph of his captors and torturers, Edgar Corado Samayoa and Enrique Cifuentes de la Cruz. Both were under the command, control, and supervision of Marco Antonio González Taracena.

According to the testimony of Orozco and Orozco, when he was confronted with Santiago Rodríguez Melgar, no. 22, he begged the medication he needed as a diabetic. He was being denied access to his medication as part of the torture to which he was subjected.

During the time he remained in the clandestine detention center, Orozco y Orozco was able to identify more victims registered in the Military Diary. This operation shows once again the pattern of linking arrests of members of structures classified as internal enemies and the systematic monitoring of these organizations in order to control, neutralize, or eliminate them.

González Taracena is also being accused of responsibility for the operation that occurred on November 16th, 1983, related to Alma Ledy Poza Gudiel. She is related to no. 23, in the Military Diary, with whom she lived. Poza Gudiel was illegally captured and subjected to torture, including sexual violence.

In her statement, Poza Gudiel states: "There was a crack through which I could see the towers of the old Technical School, which is currently the Honor Guard. I could observe within the structures of the building the spaces with arch shapes, of the windows of the towers and they were painted gray."

According to the MP, the nudity to which the witness was subjected is a constituent element of a crime against humanity. Her testimony also shows the systematic pattern of hanging, shackling, and electric shocks as forms of interrogation under torture to extract information for the intelligence network.

The Prosecutor's Office mentioned the sexual violence and forced labor to which women who were captured and held for days, months, or indefinite periods were subjected. Women have been identified by witnesses in clandestine detention centers as part of the intelligence cycle.

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Judge Miguel Ángel Gálvez postponed the hearing until Monday, April 18th at 9:00 AM, when the MP will continue with the presentation of the means of conviction against González Taracena.



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