

# ARGENTINA

**INTRODUCTION** > Argentina was under military rule from 1976 to 1983; close to 10,000 people were “disappeared” by the state during this period. Since 1984, EAAF has been investigating these political disappearances. Over the last few years, information about the role of the security forces and

the bureaucratic processes related to the repression has become increasingly available. In 1997, EAAF gained access to crucial documents stored by the federal government and the provincial government of Buenos Aires. Since then, EAAF has made steady

advances in the retrieval of these documents—most significantly, the recovery of an extensive collection of fingerprints—that have allowed the team to resolve more complex cases of disappearance. Crucial to our investigation have often been the testimonies of survivors of the *Centros Clandestinos de Detención* (Clandestine Detention Centers, CDCs) that operated during the military regime, and interviews with relatives of disappeared persons, social and political activists, and former guerrilla members. EAAF devotes a significant amount of time to conducting interviews. The investigative process carried out by EAAF is, together with the development of new DNA analysis techniques, essential to at last identify the remains of the disappeared people. >>

Architectural plan of *The Crematorium* in San Vicente cemetery, Córdoba city, where EAAF conducted archeological excavations during 2004. Photo by EAAF.

## EAAF IDENTIFICATIONS



*"They said they could do nothing because Tina's body wasn't there. Now, it is here. I want everyone to know who killed her and I want the perpetrators to be sentenced to prison," said Tina's sister Alba. "Neither Tina nor we will have peace until justice has been served," she added.*



(At left) A press clipping and (at right) an excerpt from the newspaper *El Independiente* featuring the welcome ceremony held in honor of the remains of María Cristina Lanzillotto (inset) in April 2006 in the province of La Rioja, her birthplace. She disappeared on November 10, 1976, and was identified in 2005. Her remains were among over 300 exhumed by EAAF from a mass grave at Avellaneda cemetery, Buenos Aires province. See pages 28-29.

## *"The second testimony of the French nun"*

*The remains of Léonie Duquet, one of the nuns kidnapped at ESMA by Astiz and assassinated in a death flight, were identified. Her body was buried together with Azucena Villaflor's, founder of Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. Both fell victim to the same military task force.*



(Above) Excerpt from, and (at right) Front cover of, the newspaper *Página 12* from August 30, 2005. For more on the cases of Azucena Villaflor (inset, left) and Leonie Duquet (inset right), see pages 32-38.

During the last military government, most bodies of disappeared persons were disposed of in one of two ways: they were either thrown from military aircrafts into rivers or the Argentine Sea, or buried in public cemeteries throughout the country as “N.N.” (*Ningún Nombre*/No Name or John/Jane Doe). Bodies that met the latter fate often first “appeared” on the streets or barren lands before their eventual burial. EAAF is primarily dedicated to investigating these cases, as they are the ones where the likelihood of recovering the remains is highest. Contrary to what was long believed, when the bodies “appeared,” state bureaucrats often recorded these cases of state-sponsored extrajudicial executions just as they did in regular “N.N.” cases, leaving a trail of bureaucratic documents. It is through access to these documents that EAAF is able to reconstruct the whereabouts and eventually identify the remains of disappeared individuals.

In a few instances, EAAF was able to investigate and recover the remains of disappeared persons who were sedated, dumped from air force planes into the Argentine Sea, and whose bodies eventually washed up along the coast of Argentina and Uruguay.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, these cases have been the exception and, thus, much of EAAF’s work is centered on the search for the remains of disappeared people that were buried as “N.N.” in municipal cemeteries.

## Bureaucratic Documentation of Disappearances by the State

After a person was kidnapped, taken to a clandestine detention center, tortured, and usually killed, his or her body would often be left in a public space. At this point, a series of bureaucratic-administrative procedures were followed. When a cadaver or group of cadavers was discovered—often through an “anonymous” call to the precinct—the police, with or without a judicial official, performed nearly all of the procedures conducted in regular cases. Steps included: writing a description of the discovery, taking photographs, fingerprinting the corpse, conducting an autopsy or external examination of the body, producing a death certificate, making an entry in the local registry office, and issuing a burial certificate, among others. In other words, the same state

that was committing the crime was bureaucratically obliged, simply oblivious, or indifferent, to the paper trail that it was creating. Dr. Clyde Snow, a U.S. forensic anthropologist who trained and helped found EAAF, studied such indirect sources of information on the disappeared in the late 1980s. He published an investigation of cemetery records in the province of Buenos Aires.<sup>2</sup> Snow’s study showed a statistically significant increase in the annual number of “N.N.” buried in certain cemeteries during the peak years of the repression (1976-1978). The study also showed a shift in the biological profile of this new group of “N.N.” They were much younger at the time of death than the typical John or Jane Doe and there was a larger percentage of women. Furthermore, he noted a change in their traumatic profile, i.e., the cause of death tended to be violent, mostly by gunshot wound, while in the typical “N.N.” cases it tends to be chronic diseases (malnourishment, cirrhosis) or street and train accidents.

EAAF has expanded on Dr. Snow’s work in this field. Whereas in the past, EAAF collected death certificates and cemetery records in particular locations for specific investigations, we now conduct a systematic regional survey of bureaucratically generated information. EAAF also began obtaining information from the Judiciary and the Ministry of Interior Affairs about the discovery of cadavers in public places between 1976 and 1980, when most of the executions occurred.<sup>3</sup>

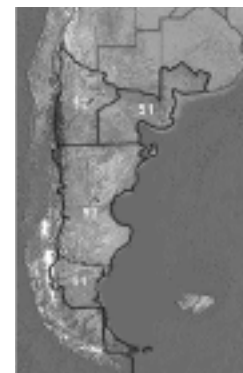
## Military Zoning of Argentina during the Last Military Government (1976-1983)

To find, recover, and identify the remains of disappeared people, we need to know how the repressive apparatus worked during Argentina’s last military regime. To understand the *modus operandi* of the repression, it is necessary to take into account the logistical and administrative structure organized by the state in its fight against “subversives.”

For most of the military period—between October 1975 and June 1982—the Armed Forces divided the country into five army command zones, each containing a major population center. Zone One



**Security forces divided Argentina into five Command Zones during the era of military repression (1976-1983).**



covered the Federal Capital, most of Buenos Aires province, and part of the province of La Pampa. Zone Two included the northeastern provinces, with headquarters in Rosario, province of Santa Fe. Zone Three, which was controlled by the Third Army Corps headquartered in Córdoba, encompassed the central, west, and northwest regions. The headquarters of Zone Four, located at the Campo de Mayo army base in Buenos Aires, were the most important military installations in the country, and had jurisdiction over the northern region of the province. The Fifth Army Corps controlled southern Argentina or Zone Five.

According to the records of the *Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas* (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, CONADEP), which are the most complete archives of the repression to date, approximately 70 percent of the kidnappings of disappeared persons occurred in the Buenos Aires metropolitan area, the Federal Capital, and the suburban areas of Buenos Aires province. As a result, a significant part of EAAF's investigations have focused on the patterns of repression in Zones One and Four, although EAAF has significantly expanded its work in other regions of Argentina over the last few years.

documenting its consequences. EAAF has had relatively easy access to some of these documents, such as death certificates and cemetery records; whereas intelligence documents have been harder to obtain. With the exception of the latter, EAAF investigates the documentary sources available in the metropolitan region of Buenos Aires.<sup>4</sup> Other urban areas, such as Córdoba and Rosario, had a somewhat different registration process, with less bureaucratic documentation. Nonetheless, EAAF gains invaluable information from national, provincial, and municipal archives in Córdoba, Santa Fe, Tucumán, Chaco, Corrientes, Formosa, Misiones, and Jujuy, which contain judicial proceedings, death certificates, and cemetery records. Other sources include newspapers from the period and current publications.

The official documentation is characterized by an impersonal and uniform language, full of euphemisms, that appears to present the facts objectively, while hiding the partiality of the state and its involvement. Despite their crucial value to the investigation, the documents are homogeneous, limited, and rigid, and cannot be taken at face value.

## I. EAAF INVESTIGATION PROCESS

Since the beginning of the investigations in Argentina, EAAF has emphasized the difference between the state's role as clandestine repressor and the bureaucratic state. This distinction has permitted the team to learn a lot about the disappearances—the same government that was practicing clandestine repression was

### 1.1 Documental Evidence: Main Archives

#### **The Provincial Registry of Persons: Death and Burial Certificates**

In 1997, the Criminal and Correctional Appeals Chamber of the Federal Capital granted EAAF access to the Buenos Aires Provincial Registry of Persons,



located in the city of La Plata, which holds the death certificates of those who died in the province of Buenos Aires.<sup>5</sup>

Two EAAF members began work at the registry in April 1997, gathering data from death certificates related to bodies discovered in the 38 jurisdictions comprising the Buenos Aires metropolitan area. EAAF prioritized those certificates marked “N.N.” which indicated violent or suspicious cause of death and/or death at a young age, categorizing them as “highly probable to correspond to disappeared persons.” These criteria are based on the typical features of the disappeared population. The compiled data were incorporated into the EAAF database that serves to match disappearances and information about killings with discoveries of bodies. In these archives, burial certificates are frequently found with death certificates, indicating the cemetery where a body was interred. Over the years, EAAF has also collected a large number of records regarding “N.N.” bodies from the cemetery books of most major graveyards in the Federal Capital, as well as in the province of Buenos Aires.

### **Buenos Aires Provincial and Federal Police**

At the same time, EAAF embarked on a similar initiative with the Buenos Aires Provincial Police, which in 1998 was under the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Province of Buenos Aires. EAAF established an agreement with said ministry, led at the time by Dr. León Arslanian, one of the Federal Court judges who sentenced the former commanders of the last military government in 1985. Crucial archives found in the Buenos Aires Provincial Police are housed in the Microfilm Section “Cadaver Files” and the Cadaver Registration Book in the *Antecedentes* section (police records on previously arrested individuals) of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police archive. Police procedure dictates opening files on the deaths of persons found unattended or who have died in violent or suspicious ways. As a result, the bodies of disappeared people were usually fingerprinted, and their prints can often still be found in the “Cadaver

Files” in microfilm format.

Within its jurisdiction, the Federal Police also keeps a microfilm archive with the fingerprints of people who have died in a violent or suspicious manner and/or are found dead in the streets. In July 1998, the Federal Court of the Federal Capital granted EAAF access to the archives available for the period 1975 to 1980.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the fact that the bodies were often fingerprinted, usually neither police department made official identifications; and in the few cases in which they did, the families of the deceased were rarely informed.

### **Analyzing Fingerprints**

Although many steps are involved in making a positive identification, in Argentina, fingerprint comparison continues to be among the most important resources for identifying disappeared persons. Argentina is in a unique position regarding fingerprints for two reasons: first, a large number of disappeared individuals were fingerprinted before being buried as “N.N.” and these records were kept by the police on microfiche. Second, all Argentines are fingerprinted by state agencies at least twice to obtain two mandatory national identity cards. This facilitates the comparison of fingerprints of cadavers taken more than twenty years ago with those kept at state agencies after people who later disappeared had received their national identity cards.

In 2005, EAAF continued to analyze and compare fingerprints, as it has been doing since 1998. The microfilms of fingerprints from the “N.N.” section of the police “Cadaver Files” and Cadaver Registration Book are the primary sources. By comparing information such as dates of kidnapping, general physical information, dates of “transfers” (often a euphemism for extrajudicial execution) of disappeared persons from clandestine detention centers, information from interviews with former militants, and from judicial, police, and military files titled “appearance of bodies” and “shootout between security forces and subversive elements,” among other sources, we formulate a hypothetical link

During 2003, the number of reported political disappearances during the last military regime grew to 9,225. This was primarily due to the one-year extension of Law 24.411, which enabled family members of

disappeared and killed persons during the era of state terrorism to claim economic reparations. EAAF continues to expand the registry, which contains 7,200 (of the 9,225) records as of 2005.

Once we identify a pair of fingerprints that may match, EAAF conducts an initial comparison. If this preliminary step is positive, we send the sets to fingerprint experts from the Ministry of Justice and Security of the province of Buenos Aires and/or from the Argentine Naval Prefecture, who are collaborating with EAAF on this project.

The process of identification proceeds from the original fingerprint match. After the first stage of identification is completed, EAAF sends the information to the Federal Chamber of the Federal Capital so that they can officially authorize the identification, communicate with the relatives of the victims, and begin the process of finding the cemetery where the remains may still be buried for possible exhumation and anthropological and genetic verification.

Regrettably, some of the remains have already been exhumed from their individual tombs by cemetery personnel and sent to the general ossuary of the cemetery. This procedure is done legally after five or ten years if grave fees are unpaid, as is typical in cases of indigents and “N.N.” cadavers. When placed in the ossuary, we can no longer recover the remains, since they are mixed with thousands of other bones.



Federal Police and the Buenos Aires Provincial Police, where we have discovered documents with the names of persons reported disappeared. In some cases, these documents often confirm information about the circumstances of death that EAAF and the victim's family already possessed. We try to correlate all this information with "N.N." burials in cemeteries in the Federal Capital and in Buenos Aires province.

Judicial and military files are scarce in comparison to the number of disappearances, yet they sometimes provide us with crucial information leading to identifications of bodies presumed to correspond to disappeared persons. Over the course of 2002, EAAF examined the judicial registry of the Federal Correctional Court No. 2 in the department of San Martín, province of Buenos Aires. We focused on the court documents from 1975 to 1979. The court heard many cases related to the political situation in 1975, right before the military coup. Following an examination of the daily court records, we selected a number of cases to pursue and recorded the most significant data from 277 of them. The investigation continued and, since 2005, as a result of the revocation of the amnesty laws, EAAF works in the Correctional Court No. 2 through an agreement with the Office of the Attorney General of Argentina.<sup>8</sup>

## 1.2 Testimonial Sources

Interviews are an important part of human rights investigations. EAAF has conducted interviews with relatives of victims, survivors, and former militants. Unlike bureaucratic documentation, this method can be unpredictable. The competence of the interviewer and the clarity of the questions are key to garnering the necessary information.

Through historical reconstruction, EAAF tries to establish the circumstances behind each act of clandestine repression (*Who? What? Where? How?*), and the reasons for it (*Why this person? Why that day? Why in that place?*). If the campaign of clandestine repression in Argentina had been indiscriminate, this research would be impossible or pointless.

Part of this information is not found in bureaucratic state documents. The only way to determine what took place is to interview those who knew the disappeared person. The differences between oral and documental information makes their comparison useful. Often, the documents have been distorted and interpreted, but at times the information from the two types of sources is complementary.

### Interviews with Families

Families can often provide valuable information about the abduction of their loved ones, their physical characteristics, and medical history. The normal EAAF procedure is to interview a family member about this information and any other data that may pertain to the case. In particular, it is crucial to know if the person was a member of or connected to a union, or political or guerrilla organization. This additional information frequently provides clues about why this individual may have been targeted for disappearance, which security forces may have been responsible, and where he/she could have been taken. EAAF also collects blood samples for future DNA analysis. Over the years, in addition to family members, we have begun to interview others who might have information about the missing individual or the incidents under investigation.

### Informational Meetings on Political-Military Organizations

As part of the historical reconstruction of events and to help with the identification process, EAAF meets with members of political-military organizations active before and during the last military regime. This type of investigation is crucial since the most visible objective of the clandestine campaign of repression was the destruction of the political-military organizations fighting the state. Repressive structures worked hard to identify people to kidnap. Once they had the person in custody, the objective was to extract two important pieces of information: to establish the person's affiliations, which would be used to determine his/her fate; and to obtain information that would lead to more kidnappings.



EAAF interviews members of the political and armed organizations active in the 1960s and 1970s, including *Montoneros*, the largest armed organization in Argentina, mostly decimated by the clandestine repression, as well as smaller, less understood, groups such as the Workers' Revolutionary Party (PRT) and its military arm, the People's Revolutionary Army of the (ERP), Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (PCML), the October 17 Revolutionary Front (FR 17), Communist Vanguard, the Agrarian Leagues, and the Agrarian Movement of Misiones (MAM).

### Research on Clandestine Detention Centers (CDCs)

Finding out who was detained at a particular CDC, as well as when and where, is an intrinsically difficult task. Often—despite bureaucratic measures intended to maintain secrecy and fear, including prohibiting communication among detainees—the only way to obtain this information is from testimonies of those who were released. Researching the political interests and affiliations of a disappeared person, can help us establish which CDC he or she may have been brought to and what may have been his or her ultimate fate, since often militants of the same association were taken to the same center and executed together.

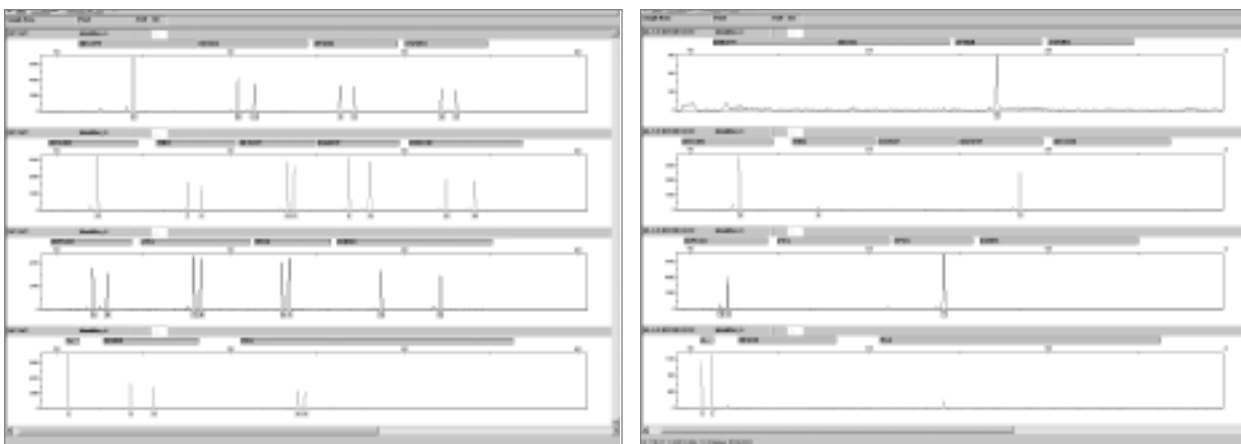
In addition to individual interviews, we conduct sessions with groups of survivors that were held in the same CDC to establish which disappeared persons were held at each clandestine detention center, and to understand how the security forces operated. In a few cases, we have offered our records on a particular detention center to survivors to prompt recollection of details outside the setting of an interview. This method permits the augmentation of information on a particular detention center in a fluid way, e.g., via e-mail, and helps survivors link their memories to existing data at their own pace without the tension of a formal interview.

## II. IMPORTANCE OF DNA ANALYSIS IN EAAF'S WORK

As illustrated above, the complexity of the pattern of repression in Argentina, which included mostly urban disappearances, and a network of hundreds of CDCs spread out throughout the country, usually results in the need for extensive historical research before EAAF can form a hypothetical match between remains and a particular family. Furthermore, the biological and traumatic profiles of victims from the Dirty War are often similar, typically consisting of young people killed by gunshot wounds. In these cases, the lack of or insufficient ante-mortem



Former detainees and relatives visiting the clandestine detention and torture center *El Olimpo*, province of Buenos Aires.  
*Photo courtesy of Marcelo Castillo.*



**Electropherograms showing complete and partial (degraded) DNA profiles. Courtesy of LIDMO.**

information about the victims, such as medical and dental records, often makes a positive identification of the remains using traditional anthropological and odontological techniques challenging.

DNA testing on soft tissue involves a more standard procedure that can be carried out by many laboratories. Extracting and sequencing DNA from bone, however, requires a more complex, time-consuming, and costly procedure, that fewer labs can perform. During the last decade, huge advances have been made in the successful development and application of DNA testing methods to skeletal remains. Recent developments that have fundamentally altered the way such identifications are made, involve less expensive techniques to compare large numbers of DNA profiles drawn from bone and tooth samples against thousands of genetic profiles from blood samples of victims' relatives. As a result, a vastly higher number of positive identifications can be made.

### **Collaboration with Genetic Laboratories**

Beginning in 1991, laboratories in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and other countries generously began performing DNA testing for EAAF. While this assistance is extremely helpful, EAAF can only identify a few individuals each year given financial and technological limitations. EAAF uses DNA testing in a small number of cases where there is a strong likelihood of positive identification, and, as



**Researchers at the private genetic laboratory LIDMO, in Córdoba city. EAAF has worked with LIDMO to identify disappeared persons since 2002.**

a result, many of the recovered remains that very likely correspond to disappeared persons have been only tentatively identified or are still unidentified.



**Close-up of a skull from a skeleton exhumed by EAAF from Lomas de Zamora cemetery, province of Buenos Aires, showing evidence of an ante-mortem nasal fracture. Distinguishing features like these help EAAF to narrow down the possible identity of the victim. Photo by EAAF.**

In 2002, EAAF began working with the *Laboratorio de Inmunogenética y Diagnóstico Molecular* (Immunogenetics and Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory, LIDMO), a private genetic laboratory in Córdoba, Argentina, to process DNA samples. This collaboration has resulted in the identification of approximately ten to thirty cases per year.

The war in the Balkans and the attack on the World Trade Center generated major technological improvements in the field of genetic identification of remains, including: 1) accelerating the processing time for each sample and lowering its cost; 2) improving the probability of extracting DNA from samples that are highly degraded and/or contaminated; and 3) developing new software that can rapidly compare thousands of genetic sequences obtained from the remains with thousands of genetic samples from possible family members.

Notably, these improvements have made processing large numbers of samples possible, and can be applied to similar cases throughout the world. EAAF hopes

to benefit from these advances, dramatically increasing the number of remains of human rights victims identified.

#### ENDNOTES

1. See EAAF Annual Report 2005, General Lavalle section, and the chapter on Uruguay in the 2002 and 2003 reports.
2. Snow, C.C. and M.J. Bihurriet. "An Epidemiology of Homicide: *Ningún Nombre* Burials in the Province of Buenos Aires from 1970 to 1984," in T.B. Jabine and R.P. Claude (Eds.) *Human Rights and Statistics: Getting the Record Straight*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania. 1992.
3. Although the military government extended to 1983, the 1976-1980 period is believed to have had the highest number of "disappearances."
4. Capital of the province of Buenos Aires, La Plata is a city located about 60 kilometers south of the city of Buenos Aires.
5. *Cámara Federal de Apelaciones en lo Criminal y Correccional de la Capital Federal*
6. After a period of time and once the fingerprint records are stored in microfilm, both the Federal and Buenos Aires Provincial Police departments destroy the originals.
7. Dr. Moller's research is supported by the University of Mar del Plata; the project won the "Solution of the Year 2000" prize in the Forensic Sciences category awarded by Advanced Magazine. The candidates for this prize are selected from research groups that work in the area of Digital Imaging Processing around the world, and who make significant contributions to the technological development of this field. Her research findings were published in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* in May 1998.
8. The judicial structure of Argentina related to the investigations of human rights violations has significantly changed following the 2005 revocation of the Amnesty Laws. The above-referenced *Oficina del Procurador General de la Nación*, under Félix Crous, has taken a central role.

## III. 2005 INVESTIGATIONS

# Province of Buenos Aires

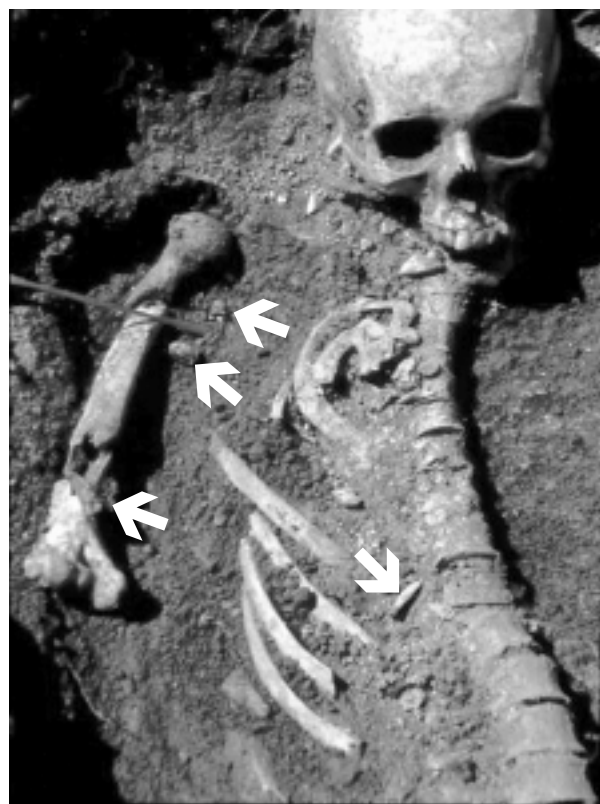
In Argentina, EAAF has primarily conducted investigations in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires, which includes the Federal Capital and the suburbs of the city of Buenos Aires, in the province of Buenos Aires. As previously discussed, two-thirds of all the disappearances in the country occurred in this area.

## AVELLANEDA CEMETERY

Between 1988 and 1992, EAAF recovered the remains of 336 individuals from Sector 134, a section of Avellaneda cemetery that was used during the last dictatorship to bury the remains of disappeared and indigent people. In 2003, with support from the German foundation Diakonisches Werk der EKD, EAAF began a project to identify the remains of fifty-one unidentified women exhumed by the team from Sector 134 using DNA analysis processed by LIDMO, an Argentine genetic laboratory. The remains of three women were identified in 2004 and the remains of six women were identified in 2005.

## BACKGROUND

In 1986, at the request of the office of the Prosecutor, who had conducted the trials against *Junta* members,<sup>1</sup> EAAF began an investigation in Sector 134 of Avellaneda municipal cemetery. This cemetery is located in a densely populated area in the southern suburbs of Buenos Aires, 12 kilometers away from the Federal Capital. The initial investigation resulted in the excavation of several mass graves possibly containing remains of disappeared persons. In 1988, EAAF was authorized to resume its work at the Avellaneda cemetery and launch a deeper investigation into Sector 134.



Skeleton exhumed from Avellaneda cemetery with bullet fragments. Photo by EAAF.

During the last military government, Sector 134 was used by the security forces as a burial site for bodies of people who were abducted, often tortured, and extra-judicially executed. Although these burials were to some extent clandestine, neighbors across the street witnessed military trucks and police vehicles entering Sector 134 on a regular basis. Many of the bodies in this section were registered and buried as “N.N.” (John/Jane Doe).



EAAF's review of the Avellaneda cemetery records and death and burial certificates from provincial and national registry offices showed that despite efforts to keep the repression secret, over 220 people were issued death certificates and recorded as buried in Sector 134 during the military regime. Of these, 160 were unidentified young people killed by gunshot wounds and brought to the site by police or military personnel. The remaining individuals fit the biological profile of regular John/Jane Does, e.g., older people, not showing traumatic signs of death, often brought by hospital personnel. The majority of those suspected to have been disappeared, were buried in 1976 (96 individuals) and 1977 (110 individuals). The number of burials in Sector 134 decreased significantly after 1978—only six individuals were recorded as buried that year, and very few were registered until 1982, when the sector stopped being used for this purpose. The concentration of burials in Sector 134 in the years 1976 and 1977 coincides with the peak of the military government repression.

The EAAF excavations of Sector 134, which ended in 1992, resulted in the recovery of 336 skeletons—116 more than cemetery records indicated. The findings were consistent with independent statistical analyses done by Snow and Bihurriet on the biological and traumatic profile of “N.N.” populations during the military rule.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to the profile of “N.N.” populations in Argentine cemeteries during “normal” years, Snow and Bihurriet showed that during the military regime, “N.N.” populations were far greater in number, younger (many between 20 and 35 years old), and included more women. Most deaths were violent, mainly resulting from gunshot wounds. In addition, the bodies were often brought to the cemeteries by military or police personnel rather than by personnel from hospices, hospitals, or fire departments.

Laboratory results show that the “N.N.” population of Sector 134 could be divided by age into the two groups described by Snow and Bihurriet. Among the younger group, a high proportion (40.17 percent) of the skeletons fell in the 21 to 35 age category. Even though the number of male victims was higher than the number of females—78 percent or 253 males and 22 percent or 71 females<sup>3</sup>—the proportion of females was higher than before and after the peak of the repression. Of the female

John/Jane Does, a significant proportion—almost 60 percent—was between 21 and 35 years of age at the time of their deaths. Finally, EAAF observed a considerable increase in violent deaths during military times, especially among the younger individuals. Evidence of gunshot wounds to the head and/or the chest was found in 73.2 percent of the “N.N.” population of Sector 134 under the age of 50, but only in 10.2 percent of the older population. Some of the younger individuals also showed blunt force trauma and burn wounds. These characteristics are consistent with the biological and traumatic profiles of the disappeared population in Argentina.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the overall pattern supported the hypothesis that Sector 134 was used as a burial ground during the six-year period from 1976 to 1982 and that the bodies of “ordinary” people, predominantly elderly male indigents, were buried along with the suspected *desaparecidos*. The team estimated that 60 percent of the remains found in this sector of the Avellaneda cemetery belonged to disappeared persons.

Individual identification of the remains from Sector 134 was a much more complicated process than determining which remains may correspond to disappeared people. As in other cases, EAAF used two strategies in its efforts to make identifications. First, the team compared the pre-mortem or physical information of the victims when they were alive provided by the victims' families with the data from the exhumation and laboratory work. However, the pre-mortem data is often scarce or not always conclusive enough to make a positive identification. Simultaneously, EAAF conducted historical research to trace individual fates through written sources, such as the archives of CONADEP, judicial proceedings, death certificates, cemetery records, autopsy reports, Federal Police archives, and interviews conducted with families of the disappeared, survivors, and former activists. Although the team has started to discern patterns in the ways that people were kidnapped and transferred between illegal detention centers, as explained above, finding the connection between these centers and the final location of the remains of people who passed through them are among the most difficult hypotheses to establish.

Sector 134 did not have any signs indicating plots or sepultures, but surface depressions helped EAAF locate the graves. As mentioned earlier, approximately 50

percent more individuals than those recorded at the cemetery registry were recovered from mass and individual graves. In the cemetery registry, some graves were labeled “*vaqueras*” (“cow holes”), a euphemism that was apparently used to describe large mass burials. These challenges further complicated the identification process.

In 2003, EAAF began a project, supported by Diakonisches Werk der EKD, to conduct DNA analysis on the skeletal remains of individuals for whom EAAF had established a strong hypothesis of the identity. Fifty-one female remains were selected and analyzed at LIDMO. The team focused the investigation on the female remains because this presented a better chance of making successful identifications given that both the number of female skeletal remains recovered from Sector 134 and the total number of disappeared women were lower than the total number of male remains (a 1 to 3 ratio). As a result of this project, EAAF identified three female individuals in 2004,<sup>5</sup> and six in 2005 (see below).

## 2005 Identifications



### **NORMA ARGENTINA BENAVIDEZ**

was born on September 7, 1954, in the province of Córdoba. On April 19, 1976, she was kidnapped, along with her husband and another couple, from her home in the vicinity of the intersection of Haiti and Herrera

streets, town of Grand Bourg, province of Buenos Aires. She was 21 years old and had two children.

There are no witness accounts of her being held at any clandestine detention center (CDC), but EAAF's historical research suggested that she was killed in a concocted confrontation.

Initially, EAAF matched her fingerprints with those of one of the female bodies brought to the Avellaneda cemetery as “N.N.” and buried in Sector 134 on May 6, 1976.

On May 7, 1976, the day following the burial, an

## **La policía rechazó nuevos ataques de los extremistas**

Tras los ataques extremistas a tres comisarias en la Capital Federal, en la noche del miércoles, hubo un episodio similar —de saldo tan cruento como violento— ocurrido durante la madrugada de la víspera y fue protagonizado por efectivos de la policía bonaerense.

Los subversivos trataron de copar el puesto policial caminero N° 12 perteneciente a la policía provincial, situado sobre la Autopista que conduce de esta capital al Aeropuerto Internacional de Ezeiza.

En la lucha perecieron cinco sediciosos, tres mujeres y dos varones, y presentó un aspecto insólito: los insurgentes utilizaron cartuchos de amonita y de gelamón, cuyo manejo requiere un especializado dominio técnico, además de ametralladoras Pam, granadas de mano y fusiles máuser con el caño recortado.

El ataque se produjo a las 2.25 cuando numerosos subversivos se aproximaron al local policial con armas y explosivos, desencadenando el fuego que fue respondido por la guardia de prevención del puesto.

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Pero ocurrió un hecho insólito, es decir, de la noche algunos extremistas heridos se refugiaron entre los árboles del Parque Centenario, en las proximidades de la comisaría 11ª, y según informó un comunicado policial “al no lograr escapar del cerco policial, perecieron allí”.

El parte policial señaló que a pesar de lo sorpresivo de los ataques “fueron inmediatamente rechazados por el personal de guardia”. Se presunta —según las fuentes policiales— que varios extremistas resultaron heridos, por las marchas de sangre verificadas en las inmediaciones de los lugares donde se produjeron los hechos y en una camioneta que se encontró abandonada en la calle Verba al 300. A raíz del ataque fueron heridos el oficial principal Antonio Proio —de gravedad— y el sargento Adolfo Rosaldi —comisaría 11ª—; los subversivos fueron Soto y Marcos Cadevilla, y el agente Armando Almaraz (comisaría 28ª). Todos están internados en el Hospital Churruarín.

Los subversivos trataron de copar el puesto policial caminero N° 12 perteneciente a la policía provincial, situado sobre la Autopista que conduce de esta capital al Aeropuerto Internacional de Ezeiza.

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**La Opinión newspaper clipping from May 7, 1976. EAAF archive.**

official communiqué paraphrased in the Argentine newspaper, *La Opinión*, reported:

*“An extremist group attempted to take over road police post No. 12, belonging to provincial police, on the expressway that goes from this capital to Ezeiza Airport. That attack occurred at 2:25 the previous evening. Five seditious individuals perished in the confrontation, three females and two males. Hours before, the police stations Nos. 11, 20, and 28 in the Federal Capital had been attacked.”*

In addition to the fingerprint comparison, EAAF made a

preliminary identification based on the comparison between the anthropological and odontological data from the remains and her ante-mortem information. The team then obtained blood samples from her two sons and sent them to LIDMO. Their genetic profiles matched the selected female skeletal remains. Thus, on November 16, 2005, EAAF confirmed the identification of Norma.



**ALCIRA CAMPIGLIA** was born on March 9, 1946. She was an architecture student at the University of Buenos Aires. She was kidnapped from the streets on June 8, 1977. She was 31 years old.

According to her partner's testimony, she was abducted from the street in Banfield, province of Buenos Aires, as she was waiting for the bus on her way to work.

The preliminary investigation revealed that Alcira had presumably died on June 8, 1977, the same day she was kidnapped, as recorded on Death Certificate 639, in Volume B of the Civil Registry of Lanús, province of Buenos Aires, describing the death of a female "N.N." at that location.

EAAF made a preliminary identification based on the comparison between the anthropological and odontological data from the remains and her ante-mortem information. The genetic profile of blood samples provided by her daughter matched the genetic profile of the selected female skeletal remains. Thus, on February 5, 2005, EAAF confirmed Alcira's identity.

**SILVIA NOEMÍ GIMÉNEZ** was born on November 30, 1953. She was an agronomy student at the *Universidad Nacional del Sur*, (National University of the South), when she and her husband, Raúl Francisco Guido, were kidnapped in the city of Mar del Plata, province of Buenos Aires on June 19, 1976. She was 22 years old. They were both members of the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (Workers' Revolutionary Party).



According to witness accounts, Sylvia was taken to a clandestine section of the police precinct in Banfield, province of Buenos Aires, known as *Pozo de Banfield*.

On April 19, 2005, at LIDMO, the genetic profile of a female skeleton was obtained and compared to blood samples provided by relatives of women who had been seen at clandestine detention centers in the vicinity of Avellaneda cemetery. The profile matched the genetic profile of Silvia Noemí's family. Also, anthropological and odontological data from the remains were consistent with her ante-mortem information, confirming Silvia Noemí's identity.

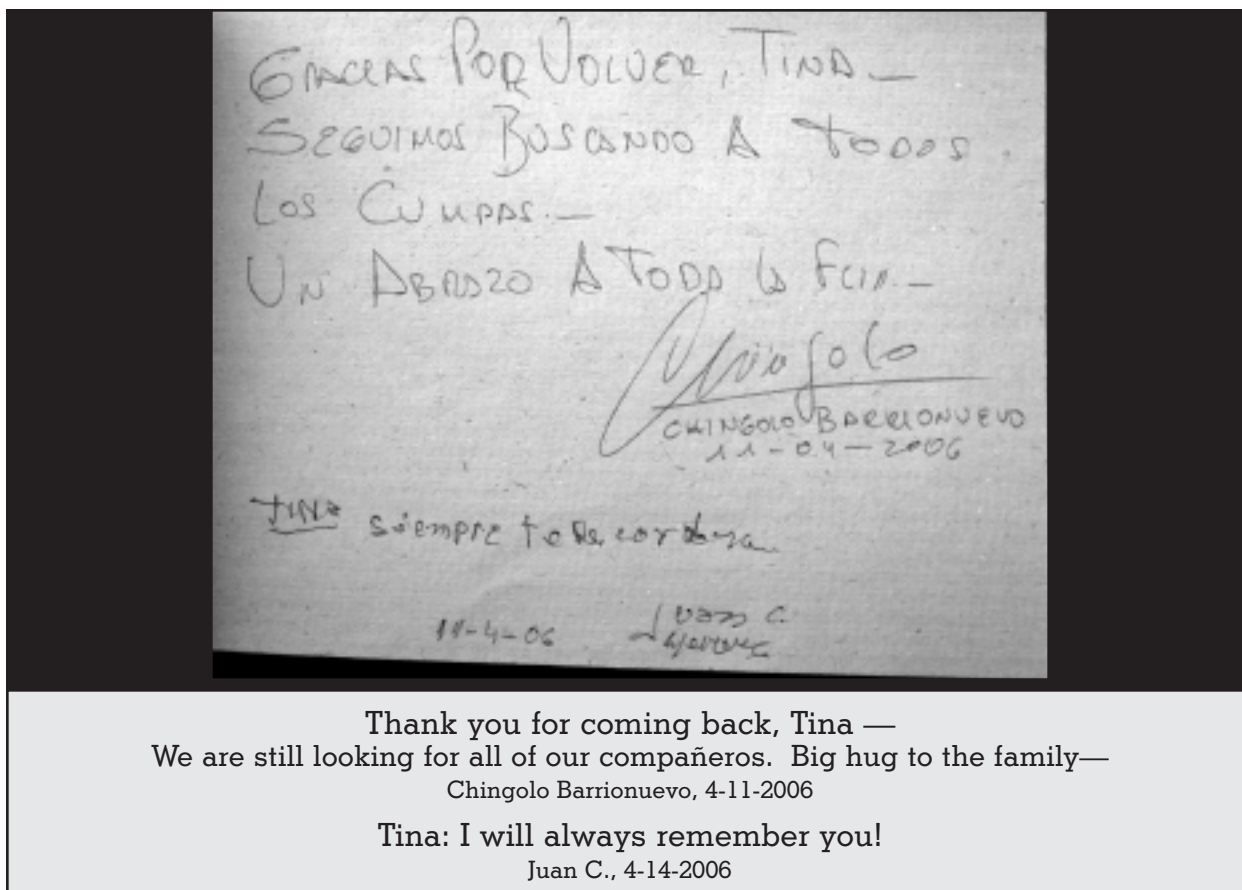
**CLAUDIA IRENE KRICHMAR** was born on November 27, 1954. She worked at Ezeiza Hospital as a medical surgical assistant. She was abducted, together with her husband, Miguel Ángel Butron, on June 18, 1976. She was 21 years old. They were both members of the *Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación* (Liberation Armed Forces, FAL). The kidnapping occurred on the street, in the neighborhood of Belgrano, Federal Capital, as they were going to pick up their daughter from day-care.



At LIDMO, the genetic profile of one of the female skeletal remains from Sector 134 matched that of Claudia's sister. Anthropological and odontological data from the remains were also consistent with her ante-mortem information. Thus, Claudia Irene was identified on April 26, 2005.

**MARÍA CRISTINA LANZILLOTTO** was born on April 22, 1947, in the province of La Rioja. She was kidnapped on November 10, 1976, from her home in Pergamino, province of Buenos Aires. Her husband, Carlos Santillán, member of the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores*, had been





detained earlier that day on the street. She was 29 years old and the mother of two, María Lucila and Jorge Francisco. Her twin sister, Ana María, was also disappeared by the military regime.

The couple was reportedly seen alive at Prison No. 3 of the city of San Nicolás, province of Buenos Aires, and later at the clandestine detention center known as *El Vesubio* until the end of December 1976.

The genetic profile of a female skeleton found at Sector 134 and those obtained from the blood samples provided by María Cristina's sister and children were compared at LIDMO. The results showed a direct family relationship between them. Anthropological and odontological data from the remains was also consistent with her ante-mortem information. Thus, on July 5, 2005, EAAF positively identified María Cristina.



**LILIANA MOLteni** was born on February 20, 1953, in the province of La Pampa. She and her partner, Daniel Elías, were kidnapped from their home in Lanús, province of Buenos Aires, on June 13, 1976. She was 23 years old.

Liliana was a journalist and worked at a textile factory in the suburbs of Buenos Aires. She appears on the list of disappeared journalists released by CONADEP in 1984.

At LIDMO, the genetic profile of a specific female skeleton from Sector 134 matched that of Olga Príncipe de Molteni, Liliana's mother. Anthropological and odontological data from the remains were also consistent with ante-mortem information from Liliana. Thus, EAAF positively identified Liliana's remains on April 21, 2005.





## LOMAS DE ZAMORA MUNICIPAL CEMETERY

### BACKGROUND

In 2005, EAAF continued the investigation begun in 2004 in the Lomas de Zamora municipal cemetery, located half an hour south of the Federal Capital in metropolitan Buenos Aires. Previous historical and documental research conducted by EAAF indicated that a large number of remains, probably corresponding to disappeared people, were buried as “N.N.” in this cemetery. The work in Lomas de Zamora was divided into three phases: preliminary investigation of burial records, police archives, and testimonies; field work and exhumation of remains; and laboratory analysis.<sup>6</sup>

To date, EAAF has recovered the remains of 49 individuals—35 males and 14 females—thought to correspond to disappeared people, located in 14 graves throughout the cemetery. EAAF excavated ten graves in 2004 and four graves in 2005. Over 70 percent of the remains corresponded to individuals between the ages of 21 and 35. Additionally, 43 of the 49 (88 percent) presented peri-mortem gunshot wounds.

Most of the bodies exhumed were buried between the years 1976 and 1978, the three peak years of the repression during Argentina’s last military government. According to the military chain of command under the repression, this region of Buenos Aires province was under the jurisdiction of the Mechanized Infantry Regiment No. 3, located in La Tablada, county of La Matanza.

To date, EAAF has established 11 initial identifications by fingerprint comparison, along with five other tentative identifications. In 2005, the team

sought out additional relatives of disappeared persons that could be related to the “N.N.” remains exhumed to donate genetic samples. EAAF conducted genetic analysis of the remains. As a result, **Eduardo Rosen** (see below) was identified in 2005. In 2006, EAAF identified three men and one woman, whose families have been informed but whose names have not yet been made public. The team is currently working to confirm the initial identifications and to identify the remaining individuals.



**EDUARDO ROSEN** was born on April 25, 1950. He worked at the Peugeot car factory, in the province of Buenos Aires. One of his co-workers, who was kidnapped on September 16, 1977, reported seeing Eduardo’s cadaver at the

CDC where he was taken. EAAF does not know how his death occurred.

EAAF’s preliminary investigation suggested that that the remains of a male “N.N.” buried at the Lomas de Zamora cemetery, whose death date was recorded on September, 16, 1977, and whose body was found at the intersection of Cerrito and San Eduardo de Villa Galicia streets, in Lomas de Zamora, province of Buenos Aires, could be Eduardo.

At LIDMO, the genetic profile of a male skeleton exhumed from the Lomas de Zamora cemetery matched that of Eduardo’s son. Anthropological and odontological data from the remains were also consistent with his ante-mortem information. Thus, EAAF identified Eduardo in October 2005.

(At left) EAAF members during exhumations at Lomas de Zamora cemetery, 2005, Buenos Aires province.  
Photo by EAAF.

# POR UNA NAV SOLO PEDIMO

AL EXCMO. SEÑOR PRESIDENTE  
A LA CORTE SUPREMA DE JUSTICIA

A LOS ALTOS MA  
LAS FUERZAS A

El Excmo. Sr. Presidente de la Nación Tte. Gral. Jorge Rafael Videla, en una reciente conferencia de prensa celebrada en EE. UU., expresó: "QUIEN DIGA VERDADES NO VA A RECIBIR REPRESALIAS POR ELLO". ¿A quién debemos recurrir para saber la VERDAD sobre la suerte corrida por nuestros hijos? Somos la expresión del dolor de cientos de MADRES Y ESPOSAS DE DESAPARECIDOS.

También prometió el Sr. Presidente en la misma oportunidad "UNA NAVIDAD EN PAZ" — LA PAZ tiene que empezar por LA VERDAD.

LA VERDAD que pedimos es saber si nuestros DESAPARECIDOS ESTAN VIVOS O MUERTOS Y DONDE ESTAN.

## "FOR A CHRISTMAS IN PEACE: WE ARE ONLY ASKING FOR THE TRUTH"

TO: YOUR EXCELLENCY MR. PRESIDENT, THE SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE,  
THE HIGHEST COMMANDERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, THE MILITARY JUNTA,  
THE AUTHORITIES OF THE CHURCH, THE NATIONAL PRESS

His Excellency Mr. President of the Nation, Lt. Gr. Jorge Rafael Videla, in a recent press conference in the U.S., stated: "WHO SAYS TRUTHS WILL NOT RECEIVE RETALIATION FOR IT." To whom should we appeal to find out THE TRUTH about the fate of our sons and daughters? We embody the pain of hundreds of MOTHERS and WIVES of DISAPPEARED.

In the same event, the President also promised a "CHRISTMAS IN PEACE" — PEACE must begin with TRUTH.

THE TRUTH we ask for is to know if our DISAPPEARED are ALIVE or DEAD and WHERE THEY ARE.

When were the full lists of DETAINEES published? Who were the victims of the EXCESSIVE REPRESSION mentioned by the President?

We cannot stand any longer the cruelest form of tortures for a mother, the UNCERTAINTY about the fate of her children. We ask for them due process to prove their guilt or innocence and, as a result, that they be sentenced or freed.

We have exhausted every means to know the TRUTH: that is why today, publicly, we request the help of the good men who truly LOVE TRUTH AND PEACE, AND OF ALL THOSE WHO REALLY BELIEVE IN GOD AND THE FINAL JUDGEMENT, WHICH NONE CAN EVADE.



The petition published in *La Prensa* on December 10, 1977, by the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, for which members of the group were kidnapped prior to its release. Note the inclusion of the names of Azucena, Ponce, and Gustavo Niño (Astiz).



# S LA VERDAD

ANDOS DE  
RMADAS

A LA JUNTA MILITAR  
A LAS AUTORIDADES ECLESIASTICAS  
A LA PRENSA NACIONAL

¿Cuándo se publicaron las listas completas de DETENIDOS? ¿Cuáles han sido las víctimas del EXCESO DE REPRESION al que se refirió el Sr. Presidente?

No soportamos ya la más cruel de las torturas para una madre, la INCERTIDUMBRE sobre el destino de sus hijos. Pedimos para ellos un proceso legal y que sea así probada su culpabilidad o inocencia y, en consecuencia, juzgados o liberados.

Hemos agotado todos los medios para llegar a LA VERDAD, por eso hoy públicamente, requerimos la ayuda de los hombres de bien que realmente AMEN LA VERDAD Y LA PAZ, Y DE TODOS AQUELLOS QUE AUTENTICAMENTE CREEN EN DIOS Y EN EL JUICIO FINAL, DEL QUE NADIE PODRA EVADIRSE.



Hundreds of people gather at a memorial service held at Santa Cruz Church, Buenos Aires, in June 2005, to honor Esther Ballestrino, María Eugenia Ponce, and Azucena Villaflor, co-founders of Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. *Photo courtesy of Jorge Larrosa.*

## THE SANTA CRUZ CHURCH CASE

### BACKGROUND

In April 1977, relatives and individuals concerned with the disappearances of friends and loved ones began gathering in Plaza de Mayo, a central square in

Buenos Aires, located in front of the house of government and the customary place for public demonstrations in Argentina. As the group grew, united by a common search, they began to assemble in private homes, bars, and churches. One of these locations was



the *Iglesia de Santa Cruz* (Santa Cruz Church) in the Federal Capital. According to testimonies given to the CONADEP, around mid-1977, Navy Lieutenant Alfredo Astiz infiltrated the group by claiming that his brother was one of the disappeared.<sup>7</sup> Astiz was actually a member of a death squad operating at the *Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada* (Navy School of Mechanics, ESMA), one of the largest and most notorious illegal detention centers active during the military government. During the latter half of 1977, Astiz, under the pseudonym Gustavo Niño, attended the group's public events and meetings and often came to Plaza de Mayo. In December of that year, the group was about to publish a petition demanding that the military government return the disappeared in *La Prensa*, a widely distributed Argentine newspaper. On December 8, 1977, ten group members, including Ángela Auad, Esther Ballestrino, and María Eugenia Ponce of Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, and French nun Alice Domon, were kidnapped from the steps of the Santa Cruz church. Two days later, on December 10, Mothers of Plaza de Mayo founding member and President Azucena Villaflor was abducted near her home, and the French nun Léonie Duquet was kidnapped from her church. According to witnesses, some of these individuals were seen alive at ESMA soon thereafter.



**EAAF exhumations at General Lavalle municipal cemetery. December 12, 2005. Photo by EAAF.**

## The first identification

Since the early 1990s, EAAF had known of Report 90/77 filed at the Necropapiloscopic Laboratory of Investigations of the Buenos Aires provincial police. The report contained the fingerprints of a woman who had been found dead on the Argentine coast at the end of December 1977. She was presumed to have been a victim of the *vuelos de la muerte* (death flights), a practice used by the military forces to dispose of disappeared persons by throwing them alive from airplanes into the Argentine Sea. Some of these bodies eventually washed out in Uruguay and on the southern coast of the province of Buenos Aires.<sup>8</sup> However, the team had to wait many years to identify the remains of the woman included in Report 90/77.

As part of its investigation, the team had requested a fingerprint comparison with one of the disappeared persons' whose last name was presumably AGUAD. However, no matches were possible, since the correct last name turned out to be AUAD. Upon recognizing the error, EAAF asked the National Registry for the fingerprints of Ángela AUAD. Thus, the identity of the individual from Report 90/77 could finally be clarified.

This was the key to the other identifications, as Ángela had been one of the individuals kidnapped from the Santa Cruz church. Once her identity was initially determined by fingerprint comparison, there was a strong likelihood that her remains would be found in close proximity to those of others kidnapped during the same incident.

## Exhumations at General Lavalle Municipal Cemetery

Based on documental and historical research, EAAF believed that some of the individuals abducted from Santa Cruz church were presumably buried in General Lavalle cemetery. The major obstacle to potential exhumations in the cemetery was that the registry book did not accurately reflect the location of the burials. Thus, EAAF began an investigation and cemetery survey to ensure that the team would be excavating the correct sites.<sup>9</sup>

According to cemetery records, the remains of six individuals who had washed up along the city's



EAAF excavation of "N.N." graves at General Laval municipal cemetery in 2005. *Photo by EAAF.*



coastline between December 20 and 29, 1977, were buried in graves 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, and 24 in the General Lavalle cemetery. The initial hypothesis was that they were victims of death flights. After conducting multiple surveys at the graveyard, between December 16, 2004, and January 4, 2005, the team exhumed seven skeletal remains, six females and one male. The team then contacted family members of the potential victims to confirm their identities.

EAAF used ante-mortem anthropological evidence to preliminarily identify five of the remains recovered at General Lavalle. LIDMO's genetic analysis confirmed the identifications. Three of the exhumed remains were found to correspond to the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo kidnapped from Santa Cruz church in April. Two other individuals abducted at the same time were identified in August 2005. Survivors from ESMA had seen some of them alive at the detention center. Additionally, according to witnesses, French nun Léonie Duquet, together with her peer, Alice Domon, had been photographed by her captors, presumably to falsely accuse an armed organization of their kidnapping.

During the laboratory study the team observed that the fractures on the bodies were consistent with those of people who had fallen from a great height onto a hard surface (even though water is not a "hard" surface, when a body or object falls from a great height, it acts as one). This pattern was observed by

EAAF in Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay, and in the General Madariaga cases involving the exhumation of people who had allegedly been thrown from airplanes. These cases are particularly significant because they are part of the first forensic investigation in Argentina to provide physical evidence indicating that abducted people who had been detained at ESMA and remained disappeared were actually thrown into the ocean. Prior to this, death flights were known mostly through testimonial evidence.<sup>10</sup> These findings are the result of several years of EAAF investigations.

During 2005, EAAF also recovered 17 bags from General Lavalle cemetery containing the skeletal remains of individuals that washed up on the Argentine coast and were buried as "N.N." in 1978. The remains were exhumed in 1984 and reburied ten years later without any anthropological analysis. According to EAAF's analysis, the minimum number of individuals (MNI) in this group corresponds to 12 persons.

## 2005 Identifications

**ÁNGELA AUAD** was born in the province of Tucumán on February 19, 1945. She studied psychology and was part of the political association *Vanguardia Comunista* (Communist Vanguard). She assisted the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo and other relatives of the disappeared. She was kidnapped on December 8,



Ángela Auad



Esther Ballestrino



Léonie Duquet

1977, from the church of Santa Cruz. Ángela was 32 years old at the time of her disappearance.

The genetic profiles of two of her brothers matched that of one of the exhumed remains. Anthropological and odontological data from the remains were also consistent with her ante-mortem information. Thus, Ángela Auad was identified on July 21, 2005.

**ESTHER BALLESTRINO** was born in Paraguay on January 20, 1918. She was a teacher who later went on to receive a doctorate in Pharmacy and Biochemistry. In her youth, she was one of the organizers of the Women's Movement of Paraguay, and served as its first secretary. She moved to Buenos Aires in 1947, where she continued to work with Paraguayan exiles who had fled the country for their opposition to the Stroessner regime. She married José Careaga and had three daughters.

In 1976, her son-in-law, Manuel Carlos Cuevas, was kidnapped, and her daughter, Ana María, was kidnapped the following year. Esther then joined Mothers of Plaza de Mayo and became one of its main organizers.

Esther also worked with *Familiares* (an association of relatives of people disappeared and detained for political reasons) and with the Argentine Human Rights League. Even after her daughter was released and went into exile with her sisters, Esther continued these activities. The other mothers asked her to join her daughters in exile, since she had already found Ana María and the situation was very dangerous. Esther reportedly replied, "And what about the others? My duty is to be here. I will continue until we find them all."

Esther was kidnapped on December 8, 1977, from the church of Santa Cruz and was held at ESMA.

The genetic profiles obtained from blood samples provided to EAAF by Esther's daughter matched the genetic profile of one of the female skeletal remains found at the General Lavalle municipal cemetery. Anthropological and odontological data from the remains were also consistent with her ante-mortem

## "Negotiations for the disappearance of two nuns."

"In relation to the disappearance of two French nuns, this last 8th and 10th [of December, 1977],

that performed missionary tasks in Buenos Aires, three events took place yesterday: the ambassador of France in Argentina presented a petition to the Chancery; in Paris was announced the departure for Argentina of the auxiliary Bishop of Annecy, Monsignor Bernard Panafieu, to look into the case; and in Washington, a spokesman of the US State Department announced that the US government had expressed their "concerns" to the

Argentine authorities in regards to the disappearance of "a group of people," as reported by the AFP agency. An armed group took the nuns Alicia and Leonisse away—along with 15 or 20 others, according to the spokesman—during a meeting in church."

### Gestiones por la desaparición de dos religiosas

Con relación a la desaparición de dos religiosas francesas, el 8 y 10 últimos, que desempeñaban tareas misioneras en Buenos Aires, ayer se produjeron tres hechos: el embajador de Francia en la Argentina presentó una nota en la Cancillería; en París se anunciaba la partida hacia aquí del obispo auxiliar de Annecy, monseñor Bernard Panafieu para ocuparse del caso y en Washington, un vocero del Departamento de Estado revelaba que el gobierno estadounidense había manifestado a las autoridades argentinas su "preocupación" por la desaparición de "un grupo de personas" según informó la agencia AFP. Las religiosas Alicia y Leonisse fueron llevadas por un grupo armado —junto con 15 o 20 personas, según el vocero— mientras se hallaban reunidas en una iglesia.

Press clipping from the Argentine newspaper *La Opinión*, published on December 16, 1977.

information. Thus, Esther Ballestrino's identity was confirmed on April 13, 2005.

**LÉONIE DUQUET** was born on April 8, 1916. She was a French nun and a strong defender of human rights. She was a vigorous supporter of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo and was involved in the search for disappeared persons in Argentina.



Léonie was kidnapped on December 10, 1977, in Ramos Mejía, province of Buenos Aires, two days after the Santa Cruz church incident. Her peer, Alice Domon, abducted from the church, remains disappeared.

Léonie Duquet was identified by EAAF on July 20, 2005, after the genetic profile of her nephew matched one of the skeletons recovered at General Lavalle cemetery. Anthropological and odontological data from the remains were also consistent with her ante-mortem information.



**MARÍA EUGENIA PONCE** was born on July 6, 1924. She was a housewife and became involved with Mothers of Plaza de Mayo after her daughter, Alicia, was kidnapped in March 1976.

She was abducted together with the group of relatives of the disappeared on December 8, 1977, from the entrance of the Santa Cruz church. She was taken to and seen by survivors at ESMA.

Anthropological and odontological data from the remains were consistent with her ante-mortem information. The genetic profile of her daughter, obtained from a blood sample given to EAAF, matched one of the recovered female skeletal remains from General Lavalle cemetery. Thus, María Eugenia Ponce was positively identified on April 16, 2005.

**AZUCENA VILLAFLORES** was born on April 7, 1924. A housewife, she became involved with other relatives of disappeared persons after her son, Néstor, was kidnapped on November 30, 1976. She was the first President of Mothers of Plaza de Mayo.

Azucena was kidnapped on December 10, 1977, from the street, a few blocks away from her house in Sarandí, province of Buenos Aires. ESMA survivors saw her alive at this detention center.

On May 13, 2005, the genetic profile of her daughter matched that of one of the exhumed remains, which were positively identified as belonging to Azucena Villaflores. Anthropological and odontological data from the remains were also consistent with her ante-mortem information.



**Azucena dancing with her son.**



EAAF members and volunteers during excavation work at Ezpeleta cemetery, province of Buenos Aires, in 2005. *Photo by EAAF.*

## EZPELETA CEMETERY

### BACKGROUND

**D**uring 2005, EAAF finished excavation work in Sector 215 of the Ezpeleta cemetery, resulting in the exhumation of 116 skeletal remains found in individual graves. The team selected 29 of these

remains for anthropological analysis and considered that, based on their biological and traumatic profiles, the others were not likely to correspond to cases of disappeared persons. The team is currently conducting further research to identify the selected remains that may potentially correspond to disappeared individuals.

## QUINTA "LA PASTORIL"

### BACKGROUND

Between March 28 and 29, 1976, days after a *coup d'état* toppled the elected government of Argentina, Mario Roberto Santucho, one of the heads of the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (People's Liberation Army, ERP), the armed branch of the *Partido de los Trabajadores* (Worker's Party, PRT), called for an urgent meeting. On March 29, the entire leadership of the organization convened at a country house called "*La Pastoril*," located in the city of Moreno, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, to reorganize itself in order to confront the military government. There were a total of 49 people at the meeting: 28 members of the Central Committee and 21 others who had been invited to join the Coordinating Committee.

The activity at the house alerted the neighbors, who called the Buenos Aires provincial police on March 29. The Armed Forces and the police launched a joint attack on the residence and an armed confrontation ensued. ERP's political heads managed to escape.

From testimonies and analysis of historical documentation, EAAF surmised that four people died in Moreno and eight were disappeared. For example, in the "Crime" section of Buenos Aires newspapers, EAAF found news of supposed confrontations in which "subversives" were killed in the days following the event.

The large amount of documentation seized by the Armed and Police Forces from the site forced the PRT to undergo major restructuring. On March 30, 1976, three other ERP members who had escaped from "*La Pastoril*" were killed by security forces in the vicinity of Marcos Paz, province of Buenos Aires. Soon after, the Córdoba base suffered a devastating blow: Eduardo Castello, its head, perished in an armed skirmish, close to a hundred PRT cells disbanded, and roughly three hundred people were kidnapped by security forces.<sup>11</sup>

In 1984, after democracy returned to Argentina, a

series of unscientific exhumations took place as part of official investigations into the fate of the disappeared in eight municipal cemeteries of the province of Buenos Aires.<sup>12</sup> Among these was the cemetery located in Moreno. In the 1980s, EAAF briefly examined some of the remains, which were stored at the Medical Legal Institute of the city of La Plata. Since 2003, EAAF has been examining the remains of these exhumations thoroughly, and was allowed by the Federal Chamber of Buenos Aires to transfer them to the National Judicial Morgue, in the Federal Capital.

EAAF research concluded that it was highly possible that the remains of 14 individuals buried as "N.N." at the municipal cemetery of Moreno were in fact the people who were killed or disappeared as a result of the March 29 confrontation and its aftermath.

In May 2004, based on historical research, anthropological examination, and DNA analysis, EAAF identified the remains of **María Elena Amadio**. In 2005, EAAF identified the remains of **Susana Emilia Gaggero** (see below). Amadio, Gaggero, and two other unidentified males had died as a result of the armed struggle in Moreno and their bodies had been in the custody of the Armed Forces.

As of this writing, EAAF is working on the identification of the other remains exhumed from Moreno cemetery.

### 2005 Identifications

**SUSANA EMILIA GAGGERO** was born on March 9, 1943. She disappeared on March 29, 1976, in Moreno, province of Buenos Aires. She was 33 years old and the mother of one. She was either killed or wounded at "*La Pastoril*" country house when security forces raided the ERP meeting. According to EAAF's investigation, her body was taken to a local hospital by the Armed Forces and then interred as "N.N" at the Moreno cemetery.

The historical investigation and pre-mortem data led EAAF to believe that one of the female skeletons of





**Susana Emilia Gaggero**



**Leonor Inés Herrera  
de Mangini**



**Hugo Ernesto  
Gomensoro Josman**



**Hilda Zulma Vergara**

the 14 remains under investigation from the Moreno cemetery could belong to Susana Emilia. The hypothesis was confirmed through genetic analysis performed by LIDMO. Susana Emilia was identified in March 2005.

**LEONOR INÉS HERRERA DE MANGINI** was born on October 9, 1948. She was abducted from the Moreno country house on March 29, 1976. She was 27 years old.

On May 21, 1976, Leonor was extrajudicially executed, along with three men, in a contrived confrontation staged in the intersection of Pilcomayo and María Bravo streets, in Avellaneda, province of Buenos Aires. She was buried as “N.N.” in Avellaneda cemetery. Her whereabouts between her kidnapping and her death are uncertain; however, she was seen in captivity in at least two different clandestine detention centers, *El Pozo de Quilmes* and *El Vesubio*, both located in the province of Buenos Aires.

Through ante-mortem and genetic analysis, EAAF positively identified Leonor’s remains on April 21, 2005.

### Other 2005 Identifications

**HUGO ERNESTO GOMENSORO JOSMAN** was born on December 14, 1953. An Uruguayan citizen, he disappeared in Argentina on April 30, 1976, while visiting the National Office of Immigration. His partner, María del Rosario Vallarino, was also

kidnapped by security forces at the time, but was released on May 4, 1976.

Hugo Ernesto’s was one of three bodies that washed up on the coast of the Río de la Plata on May 26, 1976, near Hudson, county of Berazategui, province of Buenos Aires. Two of these individuals were tightly tied to a metal bed by their arms and legs. The remains were buried soon thereafter at Berazategui municipal cemetery.

The forensic exam performed at the time concluded that the three had died of “asphyxia by submersion.” Their hands were sent to the Necropapiloscopic Laboratory of Investigations of the Police Department of Buenos Aires province, but could not be identified at the time.

EAAF exhumed the three graves on December 3, 2002, after having identified one of the victims from the fingerprints taken by the police in 1976. In 2004, EAAF identified Hugo Ernesto by the same method.

EAAF presented the report to the Federal Chamber of the Federal Capital to request genetic analysis, since the family lacked ante-mortem data and odontological records to confirm Hugo Ernesto’s identification.

Hugo Ernesto was conclusively identified on September 6, 2005, when the DNA profile obtained from his mother and sister matched that of one of the skeletons exhumed at the Berazategui municipal cemetery.



**HILDA ZULMA VERGARA** was born on November 30, 1938.

She was a member of the Workers' Socialist Party of Luján, province of Buenos Aires. Her husband, Arnaldo Buffa, was a leader of the party and a union organizer of the Luján Division of the *Sindicato de Luz y Fuerza* (Electric Worker's Union). Buffa had been kidnapped and tortured twice by the Armed Forces during 1975. After his second release, the couple left Luján in search of a safer place and stayed with friends at Paso de Los Libres, a city in the province of Corrientes, bordering with Uruguay, in hopes of leaving the country. On July 1, 1976, they and their hosts were abducted from the residence by military personnel. The wife of the second couple was released a few days later.

In November 1976, in response to the *habeas corpus* request by Hilda's father, the office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs notified Hilda's family that she and her husband had perished in a confrontation with security forces on July 31, 1976, in José León Suárez, province of Buenos Aires, without specifying where they had been buried.

Hilda Vergara's identification resulted from the research EAAF conducts in the Microfilm Section "Cadaver Files" of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police. In Cadaver File no. 47,561, titled "Military

Confrontation, José León Juárez, Buenos Aires Province, July 31, 1976," EAAF found four sets of fingerprints that the Federal Police had received as part of an official investigation into the presumed armed confrontation. At the time, the police identified three of the four individuals alleged to have

perished in the skirmish by fingerprint comparison: Hilda Zulma Vergara, her husband Arnaldo Haroldo Buffa, and Jorge Leonardo Elischer.

EAAF found that the requests for identification from the police corresponded to death certificates nos. 929, 930, 931 and 932 in the San Martín Civil Registry, all of them filed as unidentified. These four death certificates belonged to three men and a woman who died on July 31, 1976, at around three in

the morning, at the corner of Las Flores and Sarraatea streets in José León Suárez, and were buried as "N.N." in the municipal cemetery of San Martín.

At this point, EAAF contacted the families and, on September 19, 2001, exhumed the bodies from the San Martín cemetery. The National Police Laboratory of the Uruguayan Ministry of Internal Affairs provided genetic testing for this case. In 2001, the Federal Chamber of Buenos Aires issued a statement of identification for Arnaldo Harold Buffa in advance of the others because Buffa's brother was terminally ill.<sup>13</sup> He died a few months after learning about the identification. Hilda's identification was issued on July 2005.



**Reburial ceremony of the remains of Hilda Vergara at Luján cemetery, province of Buenos Aires, in September 2006. Published in the Argentine newspaper *Página 12* on September 21, 2006. Photo courtesy of *Página 12*.**

# Province of Córdoba

Since 2002, EAAF has conducted investigations in Córdoba, the second largest city in Argentina and the capital of Córdoba province. The repression in and around the city was among the most brutal in the country. The Third Army Corps, which controlled the region, was responsible for serious and massive human rights violations in this area between 1975 and 1983.

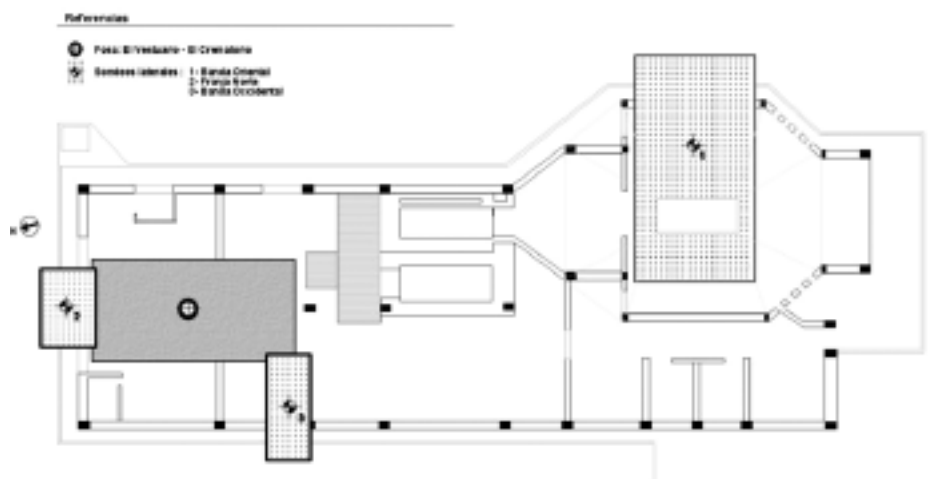
## BACKGROUND<sup>14</sup>

For most of the military period—from March 1976 through June 1982—the Armed Forces divided Argentina into five army command zones, each containing a major population center. Zone Three included the central, western, and northwestern regions. This zone was controlled by the Third Army Corps, headquartered in Córdoba city, approximately 780 kilometers northwest of Buenos Aires.

The Third Army Corps had jurisdiction over the provinces of Córdoba, San Luis, Mendoza, San Juan, La Rioja, Catamarca, Santiago del Estero, Tucumán, Salta, and Jujuy—an area of approximately 800,000 square kilometers. According to CONADEP, forty CDCs operated in this region from 1975 to 1980. Subzone

31, under the second command of the Third Army Corps, had jurisdiction over the provinces of Córdoba, La Rioja, and Catamarca.

EAAF conducted extensive historical research during 2002. The investigation indicated that most of the people “disappeared” by the State in Córdoba city and its outskirts were taken to two CDCs controlled by the Army—*La Perla* and *Campo La Ribera*. *La Perla*, located in a military post along the highway between the cities of Córdoba and Carlos Paz, started functioning as a CDC after the military coup of March 1976. *Campo La Ribera*, a military prison, began operating as a CDC in December 1975, a few months before the coup. CONADEP estimated that between 1976 and the end of 1979 roughly 2,200 disappeared people were illegally detained at *La Perla*, making it one of the largest detention centers in the country.



Plan of the different areas excavated underneath the crematorium building, San Vicente cemetery, Córdoba city. Photo by EAAF.



Excavation in progress at *El Vestuario*, San Vicente cemetery, Córdoba city. First, a grid was traced at ground level. Then, using a system of plumbs, the grids were retraced at the level of the bones. The wooden boards, seen below, were used to avoid stepping on the remains. *Photo by EAAF.*

## SAN VICENTE CEMETERY

In 1984, the existence of at least one mass grave in San Vicente cemetery, thought to contain the remains of disappeared people, became public when morgue and cemetery employees submitted official testimonies to CONADEP. In 1980, employees of Córdoba city hospital's judicial morgue had written a letter to General Videla, the *de facto* President, complaining about unhygienic labor conditions due to the large number of bodies stored at the morgue exceeding its refrigeration capacity, in which they described a mass exhumation that had taken place in 1976 under the supervision of the provincial police.<sup>15</sup> According to their testimonies, in almost every case the victims arriving at the morgue reportedly exhibited gunshot wounds, clear signs of torture, and ink stains on their fingers, implying that they had

been fingerprinted. A majority of the bodies arrived without papers, so there was no indication of which state agency had sent them, although reportedly security forces delivered the remains. At the morgue, the bodies were registered as "N.N." and recorded as "found on the street," or "killed in confrontations with security or military forces." In some instances, the bodies were identified there and military judges delivered the victims' remains to their families. Police physicians signed the death certificates. In other cases, the bodies were buried as "N.N." at the San Vicente municipal cemetery, in Córdoba city. At least four mass transfers of bodies from the judicial morgue to the cemetery were documented in 1976, involving approximately 200 individuals; similar figures were recorded in 1977.

## Overview of EAAF exhumations

In the early stages of the investigation, EAAF compiled and analyzed different sources of information relating to clandestine burials in San Vicente cemetery. The aim was to compile and compare the names and dates of disappearance of people in the Córdoba region, to the number of “N.N.” victims, their burial dates, and death certificates, among other sources, and attempt to establish a hypothesis about the identity of the victims in the graves. EAAF and the local human rights organization, ARHISTA, also conducted in-depth interviews with survivors from *La Perla* and *Campo La Ribera* CDCs and relatives of disappeared persons.

At the end of 2002, EAAF conducted exhumations of individual graves in San Vicente cemetery. During the first half of 2003, the team organized large-scale exhumations with the assistance of a Córdoba morgue employee who had participated in the 1976 mass burials and could indicate the location of the graves. This resulted in the discovery and excavation of what is so far the largest common grave relating to the Dirty War, found in Sector C of San Vicente cemetery. In this grave, EAAF found remains corresponding to a total of 91 individual skeletons and numerous clusters of incomplete remains from two different “floors” or layers, presumed to be from different burial dates. EAAF also uncovered a second mass grave, located 12 meters south of Sector C, with the remains of 32 individuals.

Following the excavation, EAAF completed laboratory work at the Córdoba Institute of Legal Medicine. Neither the existence of mass graves, nor the placement of the skeletons, follows traditional burial practices. The skeletons were intertwined, overlapping one other, with lower and upper limbs in different positions. This confirmed the witness testimony that the bodies had been thrown into the graves. Additionally, markings found in the sediment, as well as the sediment’s consistency and coloration, indicated that the graves had been dug with mechanical shovels or bulldozers. The team estimated that approximately 30 percent of the skeletons exhumed from these graves most likely correspond to persons disappeared at the end of 1975 and during the last military dictatorship (1976-1983).

Based on EAAF’s identification hypothesis, LIDMO conducted DNA analysis on bone samples from some of the individuals exhumed from San Vicente’s large mass grave, as well as blood samples from their possible relatives. As a result, EAAF identified four disappeared persons: **Mario Andrés Osatinsky, Liliana Sofía Barrios, Horacio Pietragalla, and Gustavo Gabriel Olmedo.** The remains were returned to their families.<sup>16</sup>

Between 2002 and 2004, EAAF exhumed and analyzed the remains of a total of 228 people from 14 mass and individual graves at the San Vicente cemetery. In addition, EAAF collected close to 300 samples from relatives of people who disappeared in this region during the dictatorship.

During 2005, EAAF continued to work on the laboratory analysis of the remains exhumed in 2004 from two sites located in San Vicente cemetery, “The Crematorium” and “Paradise.” To date, EAAF has recovered the remains of 83 people from these locations; however, laboratory analysis indicated that their biological and traumatic profiles are not consistent with those of disappeared people. Nevertheless, the investigation continues.

In 2005, EAAF took approximately 100 additional blood samples from relatives of victims of disappearance from Córdoba city, thus far totaling 400 samples. The genetic work is being conducted at LIDMO.

During 2005, the team made six additional identifications of remains exhumed in 2003 from the mass grave in San Vicente cemetery.

## 2005 Identifications



**ALEJANDRO ÁLVAREZ** was born on July 18, 1947. He studied medicine and psychology. He was abducted in Córdoba province in mid-August 1976, but his relatives do not know the exact time and place. He was 29 years old.



EAAF learned from testimonial evidence that Alejandro was killed by security forces along with another person during an army operation on August 13, 1976, close to Quebrada de la Luna, in the vicinity of Capilla del Monte. He was buried as “N.N.” in one of the common graves of San Vicente cemetery.

Alejandro was identified by EAAF in August 2005 after his daughter’s genetic profile matched that of one of the skeletal remains found in San Vicente.

**CARLOS ANTONIO CAFFERATA** was born on January 29, 1942, in the city of La Plata, province of Buenos Aires. He was a radiology technician and advertisement photographer.



He was kidnapped on July 29, 1976, in Córdoba city. In 1998, EAAF found a record in the Buenos Aires

Provincial Police microfilm archives, Cadaver Case

no. 47,655, requesting the identification of an “N.N.” male. The petition, which came from the province of Córdoba, had been filed with the Buenos Aires Provincial Police on August 18, 1976, identifying the “N.N.” as Cafferata, Carlos Antonio. EAAF found a similar record in the microfilm archives of the Federal Police of Argentina.

Carlos Antonio’s mother, María del Pilar Martiarena widow of Cafferata, was never notified of her son’s death and only found out about it through EAAF’s investigation.

In the course of the investigations surrounding the exhumations at San Vicente municipal cemetery, EAAF found references to the Cafferata case. The testimony of a person who was detained and disappeared at *La Perla* and later released mentions an armed operation conducted in July 1976 in the neighborhood of Parque Vélez Sársfield that resulted in the deaths of Luis Gattavara and Cafferata.

The testimony of Graciela Susana Geuna, another detained-disappeared person released from *La Perla*,

confirms the deaths. Geuna mentions the raid of María Luisa Salto’s house by security forces on July 29, 1976, two days after Salto was kidnapped and taken to the same CDC. According to the account, Luis Gattavara and “another friend from La Plata,” presumably Cafferata, died in the attack.

An EAAF examination of the morgue registry revealed that the bodies of two male “N.N.” were delivered by security forces to the Judicial Morgue in San Roque Hospital,

## “Two extremists were killed in Cordoba”



“Military officials killed two subversive delinquents last Thursday morning in a residence of the neighborhood Parque “Vélez Sarsfield,” in the city of Córdoba, the command of the Third Army Corps announced yesterday ... The military report, signed by the commander of the unit, Brigade General Luciano Benjamín Menéndez, says—in reference to the circumstances in which the two extremists were killed—that “the assault was executed based on reports provided by the population, referring to probable subversive meetings in a residence of the neighborhood Parque “Vélez Sarsfield.” To do a reconnaissance of the residence, a patrol from the Communications Battalion Command 141 was sent. Upon approaching the house—he added—the patrol chief went ahead of the others, he then verified that two suspicious individuals stood by the door of the residence, to whom he ordered “hands up,” without waiting for his soldiers. The delinquent subversives tried to use their weapons, but were killed right then and there by the mentioned official.”

Press clipping from *La Opinión*, published on July 31, 1978. EAAF archive.

Córdoba city, on July 29, 1976, at 12:30 AM. The stated cause of death was “armed confrontation.” On August 27, 1976, the office of Social Welfare took the corpses to San Vicente Municipal cemetery.

EAAF had collected blood samples from Carlos Antonio’s mother at the beginning of the team’s exhumations at San Vicente cemetery, since she had expressed her wish to retrieve her son’s remains. In August 2005, the genetic profile of one of the skeletons found at the mass grave matched that of Carlos Antonio’s relative. The anthropological comparison was also consistent, confirming his identification.

**RAFAEL ÁNGEL GRIMALD** was born on January 4, 1942, in the province of Tucumán. He was an employee of the state-owned General Belgrano Railroad. According to EAAF’s historical investigation, he was killed by security forces on August 13, 1976, in the vicinity of Obrero neighborhood, in the city of Córdoba. He was 34 years old and the father of three.



The Grimald family had no precise information about his fate. Based on vague accounts provided to them later, they presumed that Rafael had been killed in an alleged confrontation.

As in other cases, Grimald was buried at night and with no coffin in the common grave located in Sector C of San Vicente cemetery on August 27, 1976.

EAAF identified Rafael in October 2005, when the genetic profiles obtained from his children matched that of a skeleton recovered from San Vicente cemetery.

**HUGO ESTANISLAO OCHOA** was born on November 13, 1933, in Córdoba province. He was an active member of the Public Employees Union (SEP) of the city of Córdoba. He was abducted from his home on November 11, 1975. He was about to turn 42 and had five children. EAAF exhumed his

**SEGURIDAD**

**En Córdoba y Bahía Blanca**

## **Fueron abatidos nueve extremistas**

Nueve delincuentes subversivos fueron abatidos en los últimos dos días, en procedimientos efectuados en Córdoba y Bahía Blanca por fuerzas militares y policiales.

En un comunicado, el Comando del III Cuerpo de Ejército informó acerca de tres acciones llevadas a cabo el viernes último en distintos puntos de la provincia de Córdoba —una de las cuales incluyó el apoyo de dos aviones de la guarnición aérea local— en las que perecieron seis extremistas. El informe militar señala que “en prosecución de las operaciones iniciadas el 2 de agosto ante el descubrimiento del rastrejero cargado de armas, y la huida de los delincuentes que lo tripulaba, efectivos policiales de la provincia de Córdoba efectuaron el 13 de agosto a la tarde un control de rutas en la localidad de La Foida”. Agrega que a las 16 horas un automóvil que transportaba a dos individuos logró eludir el puesto de verificación y huir hacia el norte, tras lo cual “efectivos del grupo de Artillería 141, de la Policía de la provincia, con el apoyo de dos aviones de la guarnición aérea, iniciaron la persecución”. Los delincuentes fueron localizados finalmente, cerca de La Cruz, desde donde sin combatir cruzaron huyendo hacia Córdoba. En la zona de la Queda de la Lana, los efectivos militares y policiales dieron alcance y atacaron de inmediato a los subversivos, quienes según el informe “hubieron buscando refugio en un bosque cercano, donde fueron abatidos y muertos”. Un soldado herido y un agente de policía resultaron heridos durante este procedimiento, en el que se capturó una pistola ametralladora de la

policía de la provincia de Buenos Aires, una pistola calibre 11,25 mm e importante documentación.

Continúa el informe consignando que “el mismo día, a las 17.26, cuando efectivos militares de la IV Brigada de Infantería Aerotransportada transitaban en dos vehículos por calle Pueyrredón a la altura del 2400, fueron atacados sorpresivamente por dos individuos”, que alcanzaron con varios disparos de pistola al primer vehículo y arrojaron una granada que explotó detrás del segundo. Al responder los efectivos militares la agresión, los delincuentes huyeron hasta una casa del barrio obrero. Cercada la manzana, con apoyo policial y “con la ayuda de los vecinos”, las fuerzas militares “lograron ubicar y dar muerte a uno de los delincuentes, llamado Negro Lito, responsable militar de la regional Córdoba de la organización declarada ilegal en 1975”. El segundo subversivo logró huir, y ayer continuaba su búsqueda.

A las 20 horas del mismo día viernes, en el puente General Paz de la ciudad de Córdoba, una rural Fiat 128 con tres individuos trató de eludir un control de rutas. Las fuerzas policiales atacaron de inmediato al vehículo, aniquilando a sus ocupantes, cuya identificación se procura. En su poder se encontraron dos pistolas calibre 11,25 y un revólver calibre 38 largo.

El procedimiento campalino en Bahía Blanca ayer, del que informó el comando del V Cuerpo de Ejército, culminó con la muerte de tres subversivos, entre los que se encuentra una mujer, y permitió descubrir un importante arsenal en un barrio cercano a la zona céntrica de esta ciudad.

“[On August 13, 1976], ‘at 5:30 pm, as military troops of the IV Airborne Infantry Brigade traveled in two vehicles around number 2400 of Pueyrredón street, they were ambushed by two individuals who managed to shoot the first vehicle several times and throw a grenade that exploded behind the other. As the military troops responded to the aggression, the delinquents escaped to a residence in a working class neighborhood. Once the block was surrounded, with police support and ‘with the aid of the neighbors,’ the troops ‘managed to locate and kill one of the delinquents, whose name was Negro Lito, military head of the Córdoba unit of an organization declared illegal in 1975.’”

Press clipping from the newspaper *La Opinión*, published on August 15, 1976. EAAF archive.

remains from a common grave in San Vicente cemetery in 2003.

Hugo was identified by EAAF in July 2005, when the genetic profiles obtained from his children matched that of a skeleton recovered at San Vicente cemetery.



**MIGUEL ÁNGEL OLMOS**

Miguel Ángel was born on August 4, 1957. On July 13, 1976, he left his home at Alto Alberdi, Córdoba, at midnight. His family did not know where he was going. He never returned. He was 18 years old.

Miguel Ángel was identified by EAAF in October 2005, when the genetic profiles obtained from his mother matched that of a skeleton recovered at San Vicente cemetery.



**HILDA FLORA PALACIOS** was born on October 8, 1951, in the province of Santa Fe. She was abducted on November 6, 1977, in the city of Córdoba. Her husband Héctor Gerardo Chávez had been kidnapped on March 26, 1976.

EAAF's documentary investigation revealed that four persons were killed on December 14, 1977. This event also involved the Buenos Aires Provincial Police: police records documented the incorporation of three files from the Córdoba police into case file "Confrontation." They corresponded to "Horacio Humberto Brandalise (sic)" (Case File 49864), a male "N.N.," and a female "N.N." There is no information about the fourth person. According to the testimony of a survivor of the CDC La Perla, four persons were kidnapped and brought to La Perla in October, among them "Ángel" [Brandalís' nickname] and his partner [Hilda Palacios], both from Buenos Aires. Reportedly, "Ángel," along with his partner, "R. [Raúl] Cardozo," and "a certain Lajes"

[Carlos Lajas] were taken away. Their dead bodies appeared following a fabricated confrontation.

According to entry no. 1184 of the morgue registry, a female "N.N." was admitted on December 15, 1977. The body came from the Military Hospital on orders of a military judge. The cause of death was listed as gunshot wound. As per cemetery records, she was buried without identification in San Vicente cemetery on March 8, 1978, in grave number 326, block B. This body, presumably Palacios's, was admitted to the morgue together with three others. The cemetery records show the entry of two "N.N" corpses on August 3, 1978, with date of death as December 15, 1977.

The official investigation following the habeas corpus request filed by Hilda's parents on August 21, 1978, returned no results. The authorities furnished them no information regarding their daughter. However, state officials returned their two young granddaughters, who had remained in the custody of a previously-detained couple.

Hilda was identified by EAAF after her daughters' genetic profile matched that of one of the skeletons found in San Vicente cemetery. Her remains were returned to her daughters on November 11, 2004.



**GRACIELA HAYDEÉ TORRES**

was born in Córdoba, on August 6, 1953. She was abducted on June 29, 1976, from her home in the neighborhood of Barrio Observatorio, in the city of Córdoba. She was 22 years old.

She was a union activist and was studying Literature at the School of Philosophy and Humanities. She worked at the General Mitre Railroad state company.

Her remains were buried in the mass grave of the cemetery of San Vicente.

Genetic analysis by LIDMO resulted in the identification of Graciela Haydeé on May 2, 2005.

# Province of Catamarca

In July 2005, EAAF worked in the municipal cemetery of San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca on cases related to Judicial Case 4148/05 "*Mirtha de Clérici y otros sobre medidas procesales*" ("*Mirtha Clérici and others on procedural measures*") from the local Federal Court. The project included the search, exhumation, and forensic anthropological analysis of "N.N." individuals that had been buried in the local cemetery after an assault by the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (People's Liberation Army, ERP) on the army barracks in San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca in August 1974. Survivors' testimonies suggested that some of the attackers were reportedly shot after giving up their arms and surrendering to the Army and Federal Police forces.

The remains of 11 of the 16 persons killed in the attack were returned to their families by officials and buried under their own names at the time. The other five individuals were buried without being identified.

In the 1980s, as part of standard municipal procedure, the five unidentified bodies were exhumed and reburied in another part of the cemetery in order to utilize the space. According to a cemetery employee who participated in the transfer, the workers kept the bodies in their original individual metallic boxes.

EAAF was able to recover four of the five metallic boxes after several days of excavating a relatively small section of the cemetery. The remains found corresponded to four males. The team was not able to

detect any peri-mortem gunshot wounds in the recovered remains. This may be due to the fact that the skeletons were very incomplete. EAAF conducted the laboratory work at the cemetery morgue and recommended DNA testing for identification purposes.

The original case file, no. 6047/74 "Summary Instructed by Homicide, Serious Wounds, Illicit Association and Infraction, Articles 189 bis, 229, 292, 213 of the Penal Code," contained photographs and fingerprints. However, they were no longer among the documents EAAF examined.

On June 21, 2006, based on anthropological and genetic examinations, EAAF identified **DARDO RUTILIO BETANCOURT**, a twenty-four-year-old Uruguayan citizen.<sup>17</sup>





EAAF members Silvana Turner and Miguel Nieva during 2005 excavations at Francisco Solano cemetery, Resistencia city, Chaco province. *Photo by EAAF.*

# Province of Chaco

## MARGARITA BELÉN MASSACRE

On December 13, 1976, a group of approximately 22 legally and illegally detained individuals were reportedly tortured and summarily executed by security forces in the northeast province of Chaco. At the time, the Army released an official communiqué stating that on December 13, 1976, while transporting prisoners from Resistencia, the capital of Chaco province, to the province of Formosa, the convoy had been attacked by subversive elements, resulting in the death of three “subversives,” the wounding of two guards, and the escape of several prisoners. Upon the return of democracy to Argentina, further judicial investigations became possible and the incident came to be known as the “Margarita Belén Massacre,” named after the small town in which the events took place. Investigations revealed that the prisoners were removed from the federal prison in Resistencia and from the Police Brigade of Investigations of Resistencia and executed in Margarita Belén.

EAAF's investigation revealed that ten of the bodies had been buried in individual graves in Francisco Solano cemetery, located in Resistencia. In the aftermath, seven of these individuals were identified and returned to their families in sealed coffins, while three remained buried: **Luis Alberto Díaz**, an "N.N." male, and an "N.N." female. The other 12 victims of the massacre may be buried in clandestine burial sites in the same cemetery; however, further investigation is needed.

In October 2005, EAAF traveled to Resistencia and exhumed the three graves in Francisco Solano cemetery as part of an investigation by the Federal Court of Chaco, in which EAAF was named official

expert. The cemetery registry indicated that the remains of the individuals EAAF was searching for had been moved to the general ossuary. However, the team found both Luis Alberto Díaz and the "N.N." male in their original graves. In the case of the unidentified female, EAAF noted that the grave had been altered and possibly reused. The team is currently working to identify the recovered male by comparing fingerprints taken at the time from the cadaver with fingerprints on national identification documents. As of the time of this writing, his identity has not been determined.

EAAF continues investigating the individuals whose remains have not yet been found.



Hundreds of people and human rights advocates gathered in front of the Police Brigade of Investigations and in the town of Margarita Belén to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the massacre in December 2006. *Photos by the Commission for Memory of Chaco.*



# Province of Entre Ríos

**From May to October 2005, EAAF conducted exhumations on a farm outside the city of Paraná, province of Entre Ríos. The investigations were prompted by the court testimony of a witness indicating that she had noticed fresh graves at the end of 1982.**

**E**AAF conducted excavations under the leadership of Damián Vainstúb, an archaeologist from Entre Ríos, with the assistance of municipal workers. An EAAF member served as an expert witness to the court on this case and made several trips to Paraná during 2005, monitoring the progress of the investigation. Over several months, EAAF excavated

68 test trenches surveying the plot in a systematic manner; yet, no results verified the testimony. There were no significant findings from the excavations.

During one of these visits, EAAF collected 20 blood samples—ten in Paraná and ten in Santa Fe—from relatives of disappeared people for our Genetic Data Bank.

# Province of Jujuy

**Jujuy is located in the north of Argentina, bordering Bolivia; its capital is San Salvador de Jujuy. At the request of local human rights organizations, Federal Judge No. 1 of Jujuy province, Dr. Mariano Wenceslao Cardozo, initiated “Truth Trials” to clarify the incidents that took place in the province during the last military dictatorship.<sup>18</sup> EAAF was invited by family members of disappeared persons from Jujuy to work on cases in the province.**

**D**uring 2005, EAAF examined two cemeteries in search of the remains of disappeared people: one in Jujuy city and the other in Yala, a small town west of the capital. In Jujuy, EAAF identified two areas within the cemetery of possible interest.

EAAF did a preliminary investigation in Yala cemetery, including identifying “N.N.” graves and analyzing cemetery documents. At the edge of the small cemetery are a river and a hill approximately

30 meters high. The river has caused continual erosion of the hill and cemetery, resulting in the exposure of bones from old graves. Most of the graves are unmarked, and are only noticeable because of depressions in the earth. Some of the marked graves have crosses with dated inscriptions; many from 1976 to 1983, during the military dictatorship.

The investigation continues during 2006.





The archaeology team led by Juan Mobile and Pedro Mondoni conducting excavations at San Lorenzo cemetery, province of Santa Fe. 2005. *Photo by EAAF.*

## Province of Santa Fe

In 2003, EAAF was asked to serve as an expert witness on a claim filed in December 2002 in Federal Court No. 4, in the city of Rosario, Santa Fe province. The court, under Judge Omar Di Jerónimo, requested that EAAF investigate the reported existence of a mass grave in San Lorenzo municipal cemetery, located near Rosario. According to witnesses, in the winter of 1976, a military truck entered San Lorenzo cemetery and military personnel unloaded black sacks and coffins, burying them in a large grave in the northeastern corner of the cemetery. This claim initiated the judiciary file No. 654/02 regarding clandestine burials in that cemetery.

## BACKGROUND<sup>14</sup>

As explained previously, under the military government, Argentina was divided into five military command zones between March 1976 and June 1982. Command Zone Two was headquartered in the city of Rosario, Santa Fe province, and included all of the northeastern provinces. The commanders in charge of this zone were Brigade General Andrés Aníbal Guerrero, from February 1976 to November 1977; Brigade General Luciano Adolfo Jáuregui, from December 1977 to February 1979; Brigade General José Luis Sextón from February to December 1979; and General Héctor Humberto Gamen from December 1979 onward.

At least 35 CDCs operated in the province of Santa Fe during this time. In the city of Rosario and its outskirts alone, EAAF compiled a list of over 440 disappearances. Through testimonies, EAAF learned that the majority of those kidnapped in Rosario were initially brought to the *Servicio de Informaciones de la Unidad Regional N° II de la Policía de la Provincia de Santa Fe* (Information Services of the Regional Unit No. II of the Police of Santa Fe Province), also known as “*El Pozo*” (“The Hole”) or “*La Favela*” (“The Shanty”). Two other large CDCs near Rosario were *Fisherton* and *Quinta de Funes*.

### EAAF Investigation

At the time EAAF began work in Rosario, little was known about how the local repressive system operated. And, without a thorough investigation, it would be unlikely that the identity and ultimate fate of the victims buried at San Lorenzo cemetery could be ascertained. Thus, in 2004, EAAF coordinated an investigation team with professionals from the National University of Rosario (UNR), the Association of Former Political Prisoners and Survivors, the Association for the Historical

Recuperation of Argentina (ARHISTA), The Office for Historic Reconstruction of Human Rights under the Secretary of Santa Fe Province, HIJOS (representing sons and daughters of the disappeared), Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, and the Municipal Museum of the City of San Lorenzo (MMCSL). Each group is in charge of researching a different aspect of the repressive apparatus, including historical reconstruction, archaeological investigation, collection of testimonies, and mapping out the CDCs.

In 2004, as part of Case File No. 654/02, the judiciary ordered exhumations in San Lorenzo cemetery to take place. These were conducted, under the supervision of EAAF member Miguel Nievas, by a team of archaeologists led by Juan Mobile (UNR) and Pedro Mondoni (MMCSL) under the supervision of EAAF member Miguel Nieva. The excavation phase of the investigation concluded in early 2005. In 2005, EAAF analyzed the 33 remains exhumed from the cemetery, concluding that three of the remains recovered were highly likely to belong to victims of state terrorism.



One of the three was identified by EAAF in February 2006 as twenty-two-year-old **ALBERTO ISIDRO LOSADA**, who disappeared in 1975. EAAF has strong hypotheses about the identities of the remaining two individuals.

In 2005, the archaeology team searched for suspected grave sites near the city of Casilda and the *Fisherton* CDC, based on witness reports. Another group conducted interviews with relatives, survivors, and former militants to collect information about clandestine detention centers and the San Lorenzo cemetery mass grave.

# Province of Tucumán

Repression in Tucumán, located in the north of Argentina, began before the March 1976 military *coup d'état*. During 1974 and 1975, social conflicts in the area escalated and the armed actions of both guerrilla movements and paramilitary groups intensified. In 1974, the *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (People's Liberation Army, ERP) initiated an armed struggle in the forested areas of Tucumán. In February 1975, the President signed decree 261 authorizing "Operation Independence," which allowed for the "annihilation of the subversion" in the province.



EAAF members, families, and students meet in the city of Tucumán. Photo by EAAF.

In 1984, with the return to democracy, the Tucumán parliament formed a Bicameral Investigation Commission to look into the incidents in the province. The commission compiled a list of 507 kidnappings: 387 people were detained and continue disappeared, 96 were detained and later released, and the remains of 24 individuals appeared in the 1970s.

In 2005, at the request of Tucumán's District Attorney No. 1, Dr. Emilio Ferrer, EAAF began an investigation in North municipal cemetery, in San Miguel de Tucumán, capital of Tucumán province. This was part of Case File No. 1831/04, "*Romero, Enrique Fernando, about his Report*," in which EAAF was named forensic expert. In the initial phase of the

investigation, EAAF reviewed 227 "N.N." burials in North cemetery records, which were provided by the District Attorney. These included all "N.N." registrations made between June 24, 1975, and December 1983. EAAF recognized a pattern: most of the 1975 deaths occurred in rural areas; whereas most of the 1976 happened in urban centers.

These investigations produced the initial identification of two persons by comparing fingerprints taken from the cadavers with fingerprints kept in the National Registry of Persons.

As of the writing of this report, EAAF continues to research in Tucumán city.



## ENDNOTES

1. Nine top members of the military government, the *Junta*, who ruled Argentina between 1976 and 1983, were tried by the State in 1985. See Right to Truth section of this report for more information.
2. Snow, C.C. and M.J. Bihurriet. "An Epidemiology of Homicide: *Ningún Nombre* Burials in the Province of Buenos Aires from 1970 to 1984," in T.B. Jabine and R.P. Claude (Eds.) *Human Rights and Statistics: Getting the Record Straight*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania. 1992.
3. The sex of 13 or 3.86% of the total 336 could not be determined.
4. Information collected by CONADEP in 1984 revealed that 80 percent of reported disappearances were registered in 1976 and 1977; that 30 percent of the about 10 thousand disappeared persons were women; and that 70 percent of the victims were between 21 and 35 years of age at the time of death.
5. See EAAF 2005 Annual Report for a detailed description of the preliminary investigation, archaeological investigation and laboratory findings.
6. See EAAF 2005 Annual Report for a detailed description of the preliminary investigation, archaeological investigation and laboratory findings.
7. Astiz is currently in preventive detention in Argentina as a result of a judicial investigation of human rights violations committed at ESMA, including the death flights and the deaths of Léonie Duquet and Alice Domon. For the latter he was condemned in France in 1990 to life in prison, but never served the sentence.
8. Approximately, 30 bodies corresponding to disappeared Argentines were found on the Uruguayan coast during Argentina's dictatorship.
9. See EAAF 2005 Annual Report for a complete account of the archaeological investigation.
10. The only previous forensic case linking ESMA detainees with the bodies found on the coast took place in Uruguay. The body of 14-year old Floreal Avellaneda appeared on the Uruguayan shores in 1976, and was identified at the time because of a distinctive tatoo. Witnesses had seen Floreal alive at ESMA, making a strong case for the hypothesis that he had been dumped into the sea from Air Force planes. In 2002, the team recovered the remains of eight other individuals from the municipal cemetery of Colonia, Uruguay, who had also appeared on the coast of Uruguay in 1976, and who are believed to have been thrown into the sea from Air Force planes. In 1995, Adolfo Scilingo was the first Argentine military officer to confess to having taken 30 prisoners from ESMA and



throwing them to their death into the ocean from Air Force planes. (CELS, Informe sobre la situación de los derechos humanos en Argentina, Buenos Aires, 1996). He is currently serving a 30 year prison sentence in Spain for these crimes. (Trial Watch, [http://www.trial-ch.org/en/trial-watch/profile/db/facts/adolfo\\_scilingo\\_258.html](http://www.trial-ch.org/en/trial-watch/profile/db/facts/adolfo_scilingo_258.html))

11. Plis-Sterenber, Gustavo, *Monte Chingolo*, Editorial Planeta, Buenos Aires, 2004, p. 399.
12. See "Re-examining "Lost" Remains: Recovery of Remains from Non-scientific Exhumations Stored at the Medical Legal Institute of the City of La Plata," in the Argentina section, p. 29 of the EAAF 2005 Annual Report.
13. The Federal Appellate Chamber of Criminal and Correctional Cases of the Federal Capital communicates with relatives of victims and authorizes some of the exhumations and, in the case of non citizen victims, arranges for repatriation of remains.
14. See EAAF 2002, 2003 & 2005 Annual Reports for a full historical background and details of the preliminary investigation.
15. CONADEP. *Nunca Más: Informe de la Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos

Aires. 1984. File Number 1420.

16. See EAAF 2003 Annual Report; and "Cementerio de San Vicente: Informe 2003," EAAF 2005.
17. According to the Uruguayan Peace Commission's Final Report, which was presented to the Uruguayan government in 2003, close to three-fourths of the over 200 Uruguayan citizens that permanently disappeared between 1973 and 1985 were abducted in Argentina.
18. Truth Trials, an innovation particular to the Argentinean judicial system in which investigations of amnesty-covered human rights violations are carried out by courts without the possibility of criminal convictions, began in 1995 and continue today. While these courts are an officially sanctioned process, they are frequently criticized for their lack of prosecutorial authority. However, these trials serve as an important judicial process through which truth about the past is uncovered. With the recent annulment of the amnesty laws, the evidence presented at the truth trials is currently being used for prosecutions (For more information see the Special Section—Right to Truth).

