
AdvocacyNet
News Bulletin 196
April 9, 2009

FORENSIC EVIDENCE HELPS TO WIN FUJIMORI CONVICTION IN PERU

Lima, Peru: Human rights advocates in Peru are celebrating a major victory following the conviction of former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori for his role in two massacres in the early 1990s.

A three-judge panel sentenced Mr Fujimori on Tuesday to 25 years in prison for ordering the killing of 25 Peruvians. Fifteen of the victims were shot at a barbecue in the Barrios Altos area of Lima. Another 10 were abducted in 1992 from La Cantuta University and later killed.

Three forensic experts from the [Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team \(EPAF\)](#) gave testimony on the Cantuta case at Mr. Fujimori's trial in September 2008. EPAF is a partner of The Advocacy Project (AP).

In a statement, EPAF team members said the verdict gives them hope as they continue to seek justice for the thousands still missing in Peru. "This sentence is historic, not only because it represents a huge step forward in the search for truth and justice in investigations of human rights violations, but also because it is the first time that an ex-president is judged and sentenced by a court... in his own country," Jose Pablo Baraybar, EPAF's Executive Director, said in the statement.

The two massacres were carried out by a government death squad, known as Grupo Colina (Colina Group). In the Cantuta case, nine university students and one professor were abducted in a pre-dawn raid July 18, 1992 and shot in the head. Their remains were later found in an unmarked grave.

EPAF conducted forensic tests and DNA analysis on the remains in 2007 and also gave testimony to the First Anticorruption Criminal Court in Peru. Only four of the 10 victims could be positively identified, but that evidence was sufficient for the court to convict four members of the Colina death squad in April 2008.

EPAF [held a memorial service](#) with the families of Cantuta victims last summer, and the remains were finally laid to rest. AP Peace Fellow [Ash Kosiewicz](#), a Georgetown University graduate student who volunteered with EPAF last summer, [documented the memorial](#) and interviewed relatives of the victims.

In testimony during his trial, Mr Fujimori said he did not authorize the killings or kidnappings. Other evidence presented during the trial, however, linked him to the Colina group and framed the killings as part of his government's counterinsurgency strategy. In addition to the two massacres, the court also found Mr Fujimori guilty in the 1992 kidnappings of Gustavo Gorriti, a

journalist, and Samuel Dyer, a businessman.

Mr Fujimori, who may appeal his guilty verdict to Peru's Supreme Court, is to be tried separately on multiple corruption charges. He is already serving a separate six-year sentence for ordering an illegal home search in 2000.

Mr Fujimori remains a popular and controversial figure in Peru due to his efforts to crack down on the Shining Path and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Army rebel groups during his 10-year rule (1990 to 2000).

More than 69,000 Peruvians lost their lives during the country's 20-year struggle between the two insurgent groups and the government. About 15,000 people disappeared. The majority of the bodies have yet to be recovered and identified.

- Read [news coverage](#) of the Fujimori verdict
- Learn more about [EPAF's work](#)
- Check out the [blog](#) of Ash Kosiewicz