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Paraguay: Former Political Police Officers Sentenced To 25 Years In Prison

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On May 23, Pastor Coronel, political police director under former dictator Gen. Alfredo Stroessner, and three other officers were sentenced to 25 years in prison for the 1976 torture and murder of dissident Mario Schaerer. Coronel still faces charges of murder, abduction, torture, abuse of authority and illegal detention in numerous other cases. Trials of Stroessner dictatorship collaborators began in 1989. According to Francisco Jose de Vargas, opposition party legislator and former president of the Human Rights Commission, 111,000 people were illegally detained, and another 1,000 murdered or disappeared during the Stroessner dictatorship (1954-1989). Most of the abuses occurred in 1956, 1959-1961 and 1974-1976. De Vargas cited statistics prepared by the Church Emergency Aid Committee. (Source: Agence France-Presse, 05/23/92)

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