

ENGLISH EDITION

## Patio 29 Speaks Again: Four Dictatorship Victims Identified by the SML Still Missing from Chile's Official Registry

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*A CIPER investigation found that the SML identified four men executed and buried in Patio 29, but the State has yet to add them to the official registry; the Human Rights Undersecretariat told the outlet a PNB mechanism is forthcoming to close that gap.*



More than 50 years after the coup, the Legal Medical Service (SML) has identified by DNA **José González Gutiérrez, Ricardo San Martín Fuentealba, Óscar Vivanco Castro** and **Ricardo de la Jara Frez**, who were executed and secretly buried in **Patio 29**. However, despite the forensic confirmation, **their names still do not appear on the official roll** of dictatorship victims, CIPER revealed.

**Identified by the SML, missing from the state registry**

According to the investigative report, in **August 2025** the SML reported the identification of **José González**. Earlier, in **2017**, the agency had identified the remains of **Ricardo San Martín, Óscar Vivanco** and **Ricardo de la Jara**. All four were **executed** in the months following the September 11, 1973 coup and **buried in secret** in the **Patio 29 of the General Cemetery**, a landmark of Chile's memory and human rights history.

Although the SML has already added them to its “**List of human rights violation victims identified to date**”, they currently appear as “**not qualified**” in the state victims system: **they are not part of the official registry**, CIPER notes.

## **Why they are not on the official list—and what could change**

The **Human Rights Undersecretariat** told CIPER that three cases —**Vivanco, González and De la Jara**— were **never filed** before the **Rettig (1991)** and **Valech (2010–2011) Commissions**, apparently due to a **lack of awareness** of those mechanisms. In the case of **Ricardo San Martín**, his mother **submitted evidence after the deadline** and without sufficient documentation for a determination at the time.

In that context, the agency told CIPER that the **National Search Plan (PNB)** includes a **new mechanism to add cases** to the **official registry** when **technical and legal evidence** supports victim status. According to the Undersecretariat, that mechanism **is slated to take effect in the last quarter of 2025**, opening a path to **formal state recognition** for these four executed men.



**CIPER reports** that four executed victims from Patio 29, already identified by the SML, are still absent from the state registry. The Human Rights Undersecretariat told the outlet that the PNB will assess their inclusion under new criteria. (Image: Patio 29, [Wikipedia](#))

## **Civil lawsuits and the status of criminal cases**

Three families have filed **damage claims**. According to CIPER, the **21st Civil Court of Santiago recognized state responsibility** in the death of **Óscar Vivanco**. By contrast, the suit for **Ricardo San Martín** was **dismissed** at first instance — because he is not listed in Rettig/Valech — and his family has **appealed**. The sisters of **José González** sued before the **12th Civil Court**; the case remains **pending**. In the **criminal** arena, the Judiciary told CIPER that the **four investigations** ended in **temporary dismissal** due to **insufficient evidence** to indict. The **genetic identification** and a potential **reclassification** via the PNB could enable new **investigative steps**.

## **Reclassifications underway: other pieces of the puzzle**

On **September 10**, the PNB reported two cases under review for **reclassification**: that of **Luis Pino Soto** (a student from Arica who disappeared in **1986**), who was likely left out of the Rettig report due to a **transcription error** — authorities instructed that his **victim status be recognized** —; and that of **Bernarda Vera**, recorded as a **detained-disappeared** person, who was reportedly seen alive **outside Chile** and could **be removed from the registry**.

For the families of **San Martín, González, Vivanco** and **De la Jara**, the SML's forensic **identification** is a crucial **step toward truth**; what remains is the **formal state recognition** needed to lift them out of the “not qualified” limbo. If the **PNB** mechanism comes into force on the announced timeline, their names could **enter the official registry** before year's end — closing, at least in part, a **52-year** wait for **memory, recognition and reparation**.

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Fuente: El Ciudadano