

Five Military Personnel to Face Charges in Death of Conscription Soldier Franco Vargas on December 3

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On December 3, five military personnel will face charges in the death of conscription soldier Franco Vargas during a march in Putre. Accused of negligent homicide, injury, and illegitimate coercion, the case involved testimony from General Iturriaga. The investigation revealed the conscripts were subjected to "beatings," leaving 45 other soldiers injured. The mother of the deceased soldier rejected contact from one of the accused.



Original article: [Caso Franco Vargas: El 3 de diciembre serán formalizados 5 militares por muerte en Putre de joven conscripto](#)

Justice to Charge Five Military Personnel in Conscription Soldier's Death during Putre «March of Beating»



The Arica Guarantee Court has scheduled a hearing for December 3 to formally charge five military personnel in connection to the death of 19-year-old conscription soldier Franco Vargas. According to **Radio Cooperativa**, the accused individuals are **Michael Fritz Gervasoni, Claudio Guajardo Pinochet, Bjorn Wohlk Araya, Bastián Troncoso Jaque, and Manuel Zambrano González**, who will face charges of “illegitimate coercion and negligent homicide or injury.” These events occurred on April 27, 2024, during a demanding instructional march between the towns of Putre and Pacollo.

The tragic events unfolded during a march in a high mountainous region bordering Peru and Bolivia, at an elevation of over 4,000 meters. According to **TVN’s 24 Horas**, “various testimonies indicate the conscripts were subjected to ‘beatings’ in the days leading up to the incident.” Franco Vargas, who suffered these mistreatments, “initially experienced physical discomfort followed by three consecutive fainting spells.” The autopsy revealed that his death was caused by “myocarditis aggravated by stress and altitude, leading to a respiratory condition that ultimately caused his demise.”

The investigation, which has received considerable attention, included an unprecedented statement from Army Chief Javier Iturriaga to regional prosecutor Mario Carrera. **24 Horas TVN** reported that this session, requested by the defense of one of the accused, “took place at the institutional command office on September 16 and consisted of 64 questions.” The case also had immediate repercussions within the military institution, as Army Chief Javier Iturriaga called for the immediate resignation of the commander of the VI Division General Rubén Castillo due to his command responsibility.

Meanwhile, Franco Vargas' family and the plaintiffs have been closely monitoring the process. **Radio Cooperativa** quoted Romy Vargas, the conscript's mother, confirming that "I have now learned who is involved and what kind of crime was committed against whom. I was already aware of the other four; one of them, Fritz, tried to contact me, and I cut off all communication." From the **National Institute of Human Rights (INDH), a plaintiff in the case**, its regional director Ricardo Baeza stated that "the evidence we have gathered indicates serious facts that could potentially constitute illegitimate coercion, cruel treatment, and violations of the physical and mental integrity of young individuals under state care."

Defense attorney Sebastián Andrade from the MRM Legal firm emphasized the Public Ministry's work to establish "the dynamics of abuse of power, of misusing their positions to beat these young men." As the judicial process moves into its final phase, it is confirmed that the five charged military personnel are currently on temporary leave, awaiting justice to determine their responsibilities in a case that shocked the nation and resulted in not only a death but also injuries to 45 soldiers of various severities.

Fuente: [El Ciudadano](#)