

Death Caravan in La Serena: Minister Sergio Troncoso Leads Exhumation of Incorrectly Identified Remains from the '90s

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This and other actions have been carried out under the Government's Search Plan, involving professionals from the Legal Medical Service, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights' Search Plan and the Comprehensive Health Repair and Care Program (PRAIS), responsible for supporting the families.



Original article: [Caravana de la Muerte en La Serena: Ministro Sergio Troncoso encabezó exhumación de cuerpo erróneamente identificado en los '90](#)

Minister Sergio Troncoso Espinoza, responsible for Human Rights cases at the La Serena Appeals Court, oversaw a new exhumation of an unidentified body that may belong to a victim executed by the infamous «Death Caravan» during Pinochet's regime, which passed through La Serena in October 1973.

This effort follows the completion of ten previous exhumations, the results of which were shared by Minister Troncoso with the victims' families, confirming that all belonged to those executed by the military convoy. However, some bodies were misidentified and incorrectly handed over in 1998 when they were exhumed from the mass grave at the La Serena cemetery, as reported previously by El Ciudadano.

The Judicial Power initially stated that «in the municipal cemetery of Salamanca, the body erroneously labeled in the '90s as Víctor Escobar Astudillo was exhumed, and its remains were mistakenly identified in the recent exhumations.»

Later, Minister Troncoso elaborated on the exhumation: «We went to the Municipal Cemetery of Salamanca to exhume the remains that had been buried as belonging to Víctor Escobar Astudillo, a victim of the Death Caravan, which were incorrectly identified; it was established that the remains of Víctor Escobar were found in the grave designated for Jorge Jordán, another victim of the Caravan.»

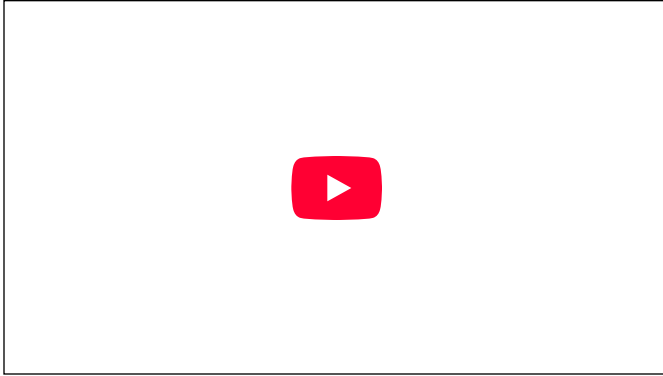
The magistrate added that the exhumed remains are sent to the Legal Medical Service in La Serena for an initial anthropological review, «at which point samples will be taken for DNA analysis to confirm to whom they really belong among all the victims of the Caravan. It is important to remember that we have genetic profiles from 14 of the 15 families of those executed.»

Family members of the political prisoners arrived at the site, hoping that these latest efforts might finally help them close a painful chapter after 52 years.

«We had already experienced this situation in '98 when the supposed remains of our brother were found. Personally, I was tasked with recognizing the bones that were assured to be his at that time. Obviously, this new hearing surprises us because we thought we had closed this chapter and that our brother was resting dignifiedly in a place we believed he was, where we could visit and leave him flowers,» said Pedro Villalobos Astudillo, brother of Víctor Escobar.



Alongside this process, Minister Troncoso led other efforts at the end of October concerning an excavation at the El Águila mine in the La Serena commune, a site where testimonies suggested that remains of disappeared detainees might exist; however, the probes yielded no positive results.



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Victims of the Death Caravan in La Serena: Minister Troncoso Dismissed Errors and Confirmed Correct Identity of Exhumed Bodies

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Fuente: El Ciudadano