



For Immediate Release

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TRIAL OF FORMER ARGENTINE OFFICER FOR 1972 MASSACRE BEGINS TODAY

Miami, Florida, June 27, 2022—Today, the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA), Keeker, Van Nest & Peters, and Markus/Moss PLLC, in collaboration with the Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), began presenting evidence in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida against former Argentine naval officer Roberto Guillermo Bravo. The plaintiffs—family members of victims Eduardo Cappello, Rubén Bonet, Ana María Villarreal de Santucho, and Alberto Camps—allege that Bravo played a key role in the mass shooting of 19 unarmed prisoners at a military base in Trelew, Argentina, on the night of August 22, 1972. The plaintiffs allege that Bravo was one of several officers who woke the prisoners before lining them up and opening fire, killing 16 and injuring 3.

“What happened in Trelew was an evil act,” said Keeker, Van Nest & Peters partner Ajay Krishnan in his opening statement. “After 50 years, we are hopeful that our clients can finally have a measure of justice.”

Today, the jury heard from historical expert James Brennan, a professor of Latin American history at the University of California, Riverside. Professor Brennan discussed the military regime that ruled Argentina in the 1970s and 1980s – a time when the government persecuted and disappeared Argentinean civilians on a massive scale. In describing the enforced disappearances, Professor Brennan stated, “It was a way to instill a sense of overwhelming dread and fear where people would self-censor and exercise a kind of social control. The best kind of dictatorship is one that's internalized, right? Where you control yourself, you control everything you say and what you do and who you talk to.”

Over the course of the trial, the jury also will hear from the plaintiffs, as well as eyewitnesses, experts, and Bravo himself about the Trelew Massacre and the coverup that followed. At the close of trial, the jury will be asked to determine whether Bravo is liable for the victims’ torture, killing and attempted killing.

In 2012, almost three decades after the country returned to democracy, three of the officers were convicted in Argentina for their roles in the Massacre. But Bravo has evaded accountability for 50 years, living in the United States since 1973. “My husband’s murderers were able to be with their families, see their children grow and meet their grandchildren, while that was denied to my family, to Humberto,” said Ilda Bonardi, justice campaigner and the wife of Humberto Adrian Toschi who was also killed during the Massacre. “Nothing will bring Humberto back, but all these years of fighting for justice—despite all the fear and obstacles—has been worth it, and we will continue until justice is completely served.”



THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Bringing Human Rights Abusers To Justice.

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About the Center for Justice and Accountability

The Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) is a San Francisco-based international human rights organization dedicated to working with communities impacted by torture, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious human rights abuses to seek truth, justice, and redress using innovative litigation and transitional justice strategies. CJA has successfully brought cases against defendants such as the Minister of Defense of Somalia's Siad Barre regime, the military officer responsible for the assassination of Chilean activist and singer Victor Jara, and Syria's Assad regime for its targeted killing of war correspondent Marie Colvin.

About Kecker, Van Nest & Peters

For more than 40 years, Kecker, Van Nest & Peters has litigated complex, high-stakes civil and criminal cases throughout the nation. The firm takes the cases where companies, products, and careers are riding on the result. Its clients are high-profile individuals, as well as some of the world's most successful companies, including Google, Facebook, Electronic Arts, Lyft, Genentech, Comcast, and Qualcomm. The firm has a rich history of pro bono representation and standing up to injustice that dates back to John Kecker's prosecution of Lt. Col. Oliver North during the Iran-Contra scandal.

About Markus/Moss PLLC

Markus/Moss is a nationally-recognized trial and appellate boutique law firm known for taking on and winning difficult criminal defense cases. The firm handles a wide variety of criminal defense matters in federal and state white-collar investigations, prosecutions and appeals around the country. Markus/Moss has successfully represented numerous high-profile clients, including athletes in all major sports, politicians, and movie directors, as well as CEOs in complex criminal antitrust cases and fraud cases, doctors in health care fraud cases, lawyers in mortgage fraud cases, politicians in election fraud investigations, and companies and executives in environmental matters.

About the Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)

The Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS, Center of Legal and Social Studies) is a leading Argentine human rights organization founded in 1979 during the last military dictatorship in Argentina. It promotes the protection of human rights and their effective exercise, justice, and social inclusion both nationally and internationally. In its early years, CELS fought for truth and justice for the gross human rights violations committed by State agents during dictatorship. Lawyers from CELS, in partnership with Chubut-based lawyer Eduardo Hualpa, represent families of the Trelew Massacre victims in the criminal proceedings brought against the perpetrators of the massacre in Argentine courts.