



THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY  
Bringing Human Rights Abusers To Justice.

## FORMER PINOCHET LIEUTENANT SUED IN FLORIDA FOR TORTURE AND DEATH OF VÍCTOR JARA

*Defendant Currently Residing in Florida; Wanted in Chile for Torture and Murder of  
Legendary Singer and Political Activist*

**JACKSONVILLE, Florida, September 4, 2013** -- The Center for Justice and Accountability (“CJA”) and pro-bono counsel Chadbourne & Parke, LLP (“Chadbourne”) today announced that they have filed a lawsuit on behalf of the surviving family members of Chilean folk singer and social icon Víctor Jara, who was imprisoned, tortured and executed in Chile during the early days of the brutal military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet on September 11, 1973. The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida against Pedro Pablo Barrientos Nuñez (“Barrientos”), a current resident of Deltona, Florida and a former officer in the Chilean Army under Pinochet. The complaint alleges that Barrientos personally tortured and executed Mr. Jara during the mass detention of thousands of intellectuals, political leaders and perceived political supporters of the Allende government at Chile Stadium immediately after the coup. The case against Barrientos includes claims of torture; extrajudicial killing; cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; crimes against humanity and arbitrary detention.

Víctor Jara was a popular Chilean singer, songwriter, university professor and political activist who advocated for social and economic equality in Chile. Mr. Jara was detained immediately following the coup on September 11, 1973, during the Chilean Army’s siege of the State Technical University, where he was a faculty member. From there, he and nearly 1,000 students, professors and other civilians were transferred from the University and imprisoned in Chile Stadium, one of the first mass detention centers in the Pinochet military dictatorship. Many of these civilians were brutally tortured and subsequently murdered for suspicion of opposition to the new military regime. According to the complaint, Mr. Jara was repeatedly tortured by soldiers under Barrientos’ command. The complaint further alleges that Barrientos ultimately shot Mr. Jara point blank in the head and then ordered soldiers under his command to repeatedly shoot Mr. Jara’s corpse. An autopsy later revealed that Mr. Jara was shot at least forty times.

Barrientos was Lieutenant and Section Commander in the “Tejas Verdes,” a particularly notorious group within the Chilean Army responsible for torturing and killing perceived political opponents of the military dictatorship. He fled Chile and was discovered in the United States in 2012.

Mr. Jara’s widow and her two daughters, Manuela and Amanda, have sought justice since 1978 when they requested Chilean authorities investigate and prosecute those responsible for his torture and murder. Their tireless pursuit of justice led the Chilean Supreme Court to indict Barrientos and seven other officers last December for the torture and murder of Mr. Jara and led to the discovery that Barrientos was living in the United States. Joan Jara and her daughters have turned their efforts for justice this time to the U.S. courts.

“Víctor’s pursuit of democracy and human rights remains an inspiration to people around the world and his memory is ever present as we mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the military coup and of Víctor’s murder,” said Joan Jara. “But we are only one of many families still affected by the brutality of Pinochet’s rule and

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the deplorable crimes committed by Barrientos and others in the regime. We want to shine a light on the severe human rights abuses from this era and bring those responsible to justice, so that victims who continue to silently suffer their losses may find some sense of peace.”

The military coup that installed Pinochet as Commander-in-Chief and President of Chile forty years ago sparked nearly two decades of violent repression targeted at civilian artists, physicians, university professors, students and other intellectuals. According to Chile’s estimates, from 1973 to 1990:

- Over 3,000 individuals were killed by state agents or “disappeared;”
- At least 50,000 people were arrested and interrogated as suspected political opponents of the new government; and
- Approximately 27,255 people were tortured.

“The fact that the man responsible for the torture and death of Victor Jara has been living freely in the United States shocks the conscience. Human rights abusers should not be able to enjoy safe haven here without consequence,” said Pamela Merchant, CJA’s Executive Director. “The Jara family is taking an important stand against impunity for human rights abusers everywhere and both CJA and Chadbourne & Park are honored to assist with their tireless search for justice.”

For more information about the case, visit [www.cja.org](http://www.cja.org).

#### **About the Center for Justice and Accountability**

CJA is a San Francisco-based human rights organization dedicated to deterring torture and other severe human rights abuses around the world and advancing the rights of survivors to seek truth, justice and redress. CJA uses litigation to hold perpetrators individually accountable for human rights abuses, develop human rights law, and advance the rule of law in countries transitioning from periods of abuse.

#### **About Chadbourne & Parke**

Chadbourne & Parke is an award-winning international law firm, which includes a globally recognized team of Public International Law & International Dispute Resolution lawyers who have extensive experience in advising and litigating in relation to all aspects of public international law and related domestic court proceedings. For additional information on Chadbourne & Parke, please visit <http://www.chadbourne.com/pil/>.

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Note: The criminal charges against Barrientos in Chile are allegations and Barrientos is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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