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## **Argentina: Death of former military leader who did not escape justice**

Argentina's former military leader, Jorge Rafael Videla, has died in prison, where he was serving a life sentence for crimes against humanity committed during his time in office.

"Argentina led the way in the prosecution of those responsible for the torture, killing and disappearance of thousands of people during the many military governments across Latin America," said Mariela Belski, Director of Amnesty International in Argentina.

"We urge Argentina and other countries in the region to continue with their efforts to bring all those responsible for the terrible crimes committed during the region's darkest years to justice. There is still much work to be done."

Former military president Jorge Rafael Videla, 87, died this morning in the Marcos Paz prison in Buenos Aires.

Last year, he was sentenced to 50 years in prison for his part in the systematic kidnapping of children during the country's military regime between 1976 and 1983.

"From the start of Videla's rule, Amnesty International received claims about human rights violations and, in November 1976, sent a research mission to Argentina. The result was the release of a comprehensive report detailing detention without judicial order and torture. There was also the first list of disappeared people."

When he died, Videla was also being tried for his role in Plan Condor – a secret coordinated operation by Latin American countries for the exchange, persecution and disappearance of political activists.

He led the military coup in Argentina in March 1976 and was head of the military junta until 1981. Argentinian human rights groups claim that at least 30,000 people were kidnapped, tortured and disappeared during Argentina's military government.