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# New Revelations Reopen Old Wounds In Aquino Assassination

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MANILA, Philippines (AP) — One of 16 soldiers convicted of killing Corazon Aquino's husband has implicated a general and two others never charged in the assassination, considered one of the nation's pivotal political events.

Former Sgt. Pablo Martinez's account, if true, would support the theory that former Sen. Benigno Aquino's killing was a high-level conspiracy. One major political group called Friday for a new investigation.

The Aug. 21, 1983, slaying of Aquino unleashed a political storm that led 2 1/2 years later to the "people power" uprising that toppled Ferdinand Marcos and installed Mrs. Aquino as president.

In 1990, the 16 soldiers were convicted and sentenced to life, but the trial never established who masterminded the killing. Mrs. Aquino remains convinced it was Marcos, who died in Hawaiian exile in 1989.

Defendants have stuck to their story that Rolando Galman, a petty criminal who Marcos claimed was a Communist, slipped past security at Manila Airport and killed Aquino moments after he returned from exile in the United States.

The 1990 trial found that the soldier-guards killed both Aquino and Galman on the tarmac.

This week, however, Martinez, one of the 16, implicated three people who were never charged, including retired Brig. Gen. Romeo Gatan.

Martinez told the Philippine Daily Inquirer that a few days before the assassination a businessman, an air force colonel and Gatan assigned him to guard Galman in a Manila hotel.

On the day of the assassination, Martinez said, he brought Galman to the tarmac at Gatan's instructions.

According to Martinez, Gatan told him Galman was to kill Aquino. If Galman lost his nerve, Gatan was

to kill Galman, and if Aquino also died in the gunfire, ``it's not your fault."

Gatan denies ever meeting Galman or Martinez.

Martinez insisted that Galman shot Aquino and was killed by the soldiers, just as the Marcos government claimed. That finding was disputed by the 1990 trial court, which determined Aquino was shot by a military escort standing above him on the airplane's staircase.

On Friday, the largest political coalition, Lakas-Laban, called for reopening the investigation ``to end the lingering division among our people triggered by this dastardly act."

Since Marcos' downfall, governments here have idolized Benigno Aquino as a national hero. His murder is considered a salient event in Philippine history.

But the government has shown little interest in reviving the investigation. Two years ago, Sen. Blas Ople met the defendants in prison after announcing they had new information in the case.

Ople never revealed publicly what he had been told. After Ople's meeting, Justice Secretary Franklin Drilon said he would appoint a commission

to study the ``new information."

The commission quietly disappeared and announced nothing.