

Center for Justice and Accountability

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://cja.org/what-we-do/litigation/jara-v-barrientos/>

Campaign and Advocacy

Following a bloody coup that toppled Chile's democratically elected government, General Augusto Pinochet's regime executed or disappeared more than 3,200 people, and detained and tortured over 30,000 more. Legendary folk singer Víctor Jara was among the murdered. While Pinochet's regime ended in 1988, decades went by as those who tortured and murdered Jara and thousands of others remained unidentified. CJA represents the family of Víctor Jara to bring to justice the individual responsible for his death.

In 1973, Víctor Jara was one of Chile's biggest music stars, famous for his outspoken messages of social equality and the plight of the working class. When the right-wing Pinochet regime seized power, Jara was one of the first to be singled out.

Just one day after the coup, military troops took control of the university where Jara taught.

Jara, along with hundreds of other students, professors, and staff members, was taken to Chile Stadium, the most notorious mass detention center run by the new dictatorship. Jara was interrogated and tortured before being shot 44 times: a warning to those who challenged Pinochet's authority.

Chile Stadium was later renamed in honor of Jara. Yet for decades justice remained elusive. Jara remains the most potent symbol of a nation struggling to find peace with itself more than two decades since the return of democracy.

Finally, in 2009, former soldiers broke their long-held silence about the atrocities of Chile Stadium, including information about the killing of Jara. In a Chilean court, prosecutors indicted 10 former military officials. One of the men was Pedro Barrientos Neza, the former lieutenant alleged to have participated in the killing of Jara. While the other former military officials remained in Chile, Barrientos had moved to Florida, beyond the reach of Chilean courts.

That's where CJA stepped in.

In September 2013, on behalf of Jara's widow and children, CJA filed a civil suit in a Florida court against Barrientos on claims of torture and extrajudicial killing. The suit seeks to hold Barrientos accountable for Jara's torture and murder. Barrientos argued that U.S. courts lacked jurisdiction, but in April 2015, the court ordered the case to move forward.

CJA has been instrumental in reconstructing the story of what happened in the first days after the coup, as these events have remained shrouded in mystery for over 40 years. The case, along with the work of Chilean prosecutors who have indicted Barrientos, will finally provide judicial acknowledgement to the victims of Chile Stadium.

The trial for Jara v. Barrientos began in Orlando, Florida on June 13, 2016. To read a full summary of the trial, please click [here](#). The jury delivered their verdict on June 27, 2016, declaring Barrientos liable for his involvement in Jara's torture and murder. He was ordered to pay Jara's estate and family \$28 million in compensatory and punitive damages.



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GERALD GRAY LEGACY CIRCLE

GERALD GRAY FOUNDED CJA IN 1998 AND CONTINUES
WORKING TO HELP TORTURE SURVIVORS TODAY.

Join the Gerald Gray Legacy Circle

To join, please let us know that you have included CJA in your estate plans, insurance policy, or planned giving instrument by contacting us at center4justice@cja.org. We will ensure your gift supports CJA's mission and welcome you to the Gerald Gray Legacy Circle.

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***“We will never catch all the torturers—but we will always catch some,
and none of them will ever know who is next.”***