

Center for Justice and Accountability

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

<https://cja.org/what-we-do/litigation/cabello-v-fernandez-larios/>

Campaign and Advocacy

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Following the 1973 military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet in Chile, a military death squad known as the Caravan of Death travelled city to city, dragging political prisoners from jail and executing them. Two decades later, CJA and the family of one of the victims brought a civil suit against former Caravan member Armando Fernandez Larios. When a Miami jury found Fernandez Larios liable for torture, crimes against humanity, and extrajudicial killing it was the first time a Pinochet-era perpetrator had been tried in the United States.

The Caravan of Death scoured the country from prison to prison in search of political opponents to the new military regime. Over the course of several weeks, the convoy brutally tortured and executed at least 75 Chileans and put their bodies in unmarked graves.

One of their victims was Winston Cabello, a young economist who had worked for ousted President Salvador Allende and was suspected of being disloyal to the new military dictatorship under General Pinochet.

On September 12, 1973, the day after the coup, Winston was arrested and held at a military garrison with other political prisoners. After five weeks, he was told that his file had been reviewed and that his release was imminent.

Instead, defendant Armando Fernandez Larios and the other members of the Caravan of Death arrived and took Winston and 12 other prisoners, put them onto a military truck, and drove to a secluded area and executed them all. The government issued an announcement that the prisoners were shot while trying to escape.

It was not until 1990, once Pinochet had left power, that the families were told where to find the bodies. Once exhumed, the victims' bodies bore signs of atrocious torture.

By this time, Fernandez Larios had already retired to the United States, where he publicly acknowledged that he had been part of the Caravan of Death.

However, a Chilean amnesty law barred prosecution in Chile, and U.S. criminal law did not permit prosecution for either extrajudicial killings nor torture committed abroad before 1994.

In 1999, CJA filed a civil suit against Fernandez Larios, the Cabello family's only legal remedy for justice. In 2003, a Miami jury found Fernandez Larios liable for torture, crimes against humanity, and extrajudicial killing and awarded \$4 million in damages to the Cabello family.

The Cabello family's victory was a powerful vindication for the survivors of Pinochet's regime.



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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."***