**Uruguay**

**Military dictatorship (1973-1985)**

**Categories:** Dictatorship; coup; Operation Condor; amnesty law; reparation law; truth commission; state museum; memorial sites.

**Actors:** Uruguayan armed forces; Uruguayan political parties (several of which were banned during the period); social organisations; guerrilla movements active during the previous decade.

**Key historical events**

1973 – Coup d’état. On June 27, Juan María Bordaberry dissolves the parliament and takes control of the government with the armed forces. Political parties and civic organisations were dissolved, and the universities and public administration were interfered with.

A period of violent repression by state agents began, including the imprisonment, torture and murder of citizens.La Secretaría de Derechos humanos estimates that 192 people disappeared during this period. The Museo de la Memoria estimates that around 5,000 people were prosecuted by the military justice system, a further 3,700 were detained without trial, and 380,000 were forced into exile.

1976 – The armed forces ousted Bordaberry and took full control of the government.

1976 – Zelmar Michelini and Héctor Gutiérrez, opposition politicians, and Rosario Barredo and William Whitelaw of the Tupamaros movement, were murdered in Buenos Aires.

1980 – In a referendum, Uruguayans rejected the constitutional reform proposed by the authoritarian regime.

1983 – Acto del obelisco. In a year that saw numerous demonstrations against the dictatorship, this rally was the largest. A proclamation was made in favour of democracy in Uruguay.

1984 – Pacto del Club Naval. Negotiations were held between representatives of various political parties and the Uruguayan armed forces. It was the prelude to the elections held later that year.

1985 – On March 1, Julio María Sanguinetti assumes the presidency following democratic elections.

1985 – On March 14, the last political prisoners of the dictatorship are released from the Cárcel Central.

**Memory initiatives**

*Ley 15.737 (1985):* a law that allowed the release of political prisoners by declaring an amnesty for political crimes committed by civilians.

*Informe final de la Comisión por la paz* (2003): a report containing the results of the work of this commission on the cases of forcibly disappeared prisoners.

*Investigación Histórica sobre Detenidos–Desaparecidos (2006)*: a five-volume document published as a result of an agreement between the Uruguayan Presidency and the Universidad de la República, to study in detail the cases of enforced disappearance.

*Ley 18.596 (2009):* a law that recognises the responsibility of the Uruguayan State for the violation of fundamental rights between 1968 and 1975, and the right to full reparation for the victims.

*Ley 19.641 (2018). Sitios de Memoria Histórica del pasado reciente*: a law that aims to create sites of remembrance in places where the actions of the State led to the violation of human rights.

**Sites of memory**

*Memorial en Recordación de los Detenidos y Desaparecidos.* a monument inaugurated in 2001, located on the Cerro de Montevideo. It contains engravings of the names of citizens who disappeared during the dictatorship.

*Marcas de la memoria:* a spatial intervention project that includes the installation of commemorative plaques in a series of sites associated with the resistance of Uruguayan civil society against the dictatorship.

*Museo de la memoria (MUME)*: an institution dedicated to the promotion of human rights through the construction of memory. It houses various records of state violence during the dictatorship and forms of resistance to it.

*Marcha del silencio*: a walk held every year on March 20, since 2016, in different parts of Uruguay to demand the clarification of crimes committed during the dictatorship.

**Organisations**

*Servicio Paz y Justicia Uruguay (SERPAJ):* a non-governmental organisation active since 1981, assisting relatives of disappeared prisoners and organising demonstrations against the dictatorship. Regularly publishes reports on the human rights situation.

*Madres y familiares de uruguayos detenidos desaparecidos:* organisation consolidated in 1983, bringing together relatives of disappeared prisoners.

*Institución de Estudios Sociales y Legales del Uruguay (IELSUR)*: a non-governmental organisation that has been carrying out legal actions in defence of human rights since 1984.

*Comisión Investigadora sobre la situación de Personas Desaparecidas y Hechos que la Motivaron*: an official body created in 1985 to investigate allegations of disappearances that occurred between 1973 and 1978. Its findings were published in a report.

*Comisión por la Paz*:body created in 2000 to investigate the disappearances that took place during the dictatorship. In the work of the Commission, the State takes on the work of remembrance as an official task.

**Issues specific to the country**