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English Language Translation: Rutgers Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights-UNESCO Chair for Genocide Prevention

CASE ESMA III Hearing Hearing Monday, December 3, 2012- Day 3

This hearing was devoted to the reading of the accusation, with a brief exposition of each case including the name of the victim, his or her family, militancy and study circles. Also, the facts of his/her kidnapping, the tortures received, the name of the repressors implicated (when this information is available). It was also stated whether the victim was liberated, murdered or is still considered disappeared.

Other elements that particularize each case were also mentioned, such as the inclusion of cases including boys and girls, direct victims of the repression, both those born in captivity as well as those who were appropriated during this period, such as those who were kidnapped with their parents and later freed.

Another significant element is the inclusion of accusation for the crime of forced labor. At ESMA the slave labor by detainees was organized under the label, established by the repressors, of “process of recuperation of detainees.” This process took place inside and outside
the ESMA facilities, and included activities related both to the functioning of the repression mechanism, as well as political and productive objectives. All labor was done without pay. The appropriation of the property of those kidnapped was also mentioned; this was done, for example, under the modality of exchange of family property for the liberation of those kidnapped.

Also, victims are not presented as isolated individuals, both as members of groups, be it student groups (for example, members of the School of Architecture of the University of Buenos Aires), or family groups. That is why the same accusation states that these crimes “... are aggravated by the circumstance of having relatives —siblings, partners, sons, daughters, nephews— detained in the same clandestine center and under the same deplorable conditions.” The political militancy of the victims was also mentioned.

Finally, it was stated that the links covered the whole Argentinian territory, and were not centered only in Buenos Aires, since victims were kidnapped in other provinces and later transferred to ESMA. It was also mentioned that the physical limits of the detention centers were surpassed, since many survivors were subjected to a “watched freedom” once they were freed, to the extent that some were visited in their homes by members of the clandestine center.