

**Former Argentine dictator Videla gets life in prison**  
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BUENOS AIRES - Former Argentine dictator Jorge Rafael Videla (picture) was sentenced Wednesday to life in prison for crimes against humanity during Argentina's 1976-83 military dictatorship.

Videla, who was commander of the Argentine Army at the time of the 1976 coup and led the country until 1981, was found guilty of torture, premeditated homicide and torture leading to death.

The 85-year-old, who appeared to be in good health when he addressed the court, is to serve his sentence in prison, not under house arrest.

The 1976-83 dictatorship is believed to have claimed 30,000 lives, according to human rights organizations, though remains have never been found from most of the victims.

In his plea, Videla insisted that the military regime acted to prevent the spread of communism into Argentina, and that any deaths happened in a context of internal conflict within the country.

Videla was tried along with 29 other suspects on charges of having committed human rights violations during the dictatorship.

Luciano Benjamin Menendez, who commanded the Third Army Corps during the dictatorship, was sentenced to life in prison, though it was not known if he might be allowed to serve house arrest.

Videla was already sentenced to life in prison in 1985, but he was released in 1990 when Argentine then-president Carlos Menem (1989-99) issued a pardon.

In 1998, Videla was arrested again on charges from the dictatorship era of stealing babies from political prisoners and giving them to families linked to the regime. After his conviction on those charges, he was sentenced to a life term, which he has been serving first under house arrest and since 2008 at a military prison. - dpa

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