***Documentality and Display: Archiving and curating the violent past in contemporary Argentina, Chile and Colombia***

**British Academy’s Sustainable Development Programme 2018, supported under the Global Challenges Research Fund, United Kingdom**

**Santiago de Chile, January 2019**

**I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Institution: **Fundación Documentación y Archivo de la Vicaría de la Solidaridad (FUNVISOL), Avda. Ossa 479, La Reina, Santiago de Chile.**

Name and position:

* **María Paz Vergara (Marita)**, Executive secretary, Fundación Documentación y Archivo de la Vicaría de la Solidaridad.

Interviewers: Oriana Bernasconi, Cecilia Sosa, Jaime Hernández y Vikki Bell.

Location: FUNVISOL

Date: January 7th 2019

Duration: 1:39:23

**II. TRANSCRIPTION**

MARITA: …Of human rights violations in Santiago and through the whole country. And there was no political or religious diffusion. In the beginning, an insert in the newspapers El Mercurio and La Tercera de la Hora was made to publicize the existence of the Comité. These were the only newspapers that circulated at that time. [In those inserts] people who were being thrown out of their jobs were called, to not present any resignation and to not sign any document and to go to the Comité office, which in the beginning operated in the archbishopric of Santiago.

Well, all the legal actions that were conducted were made with a probable source, that means, with documentation that supported the legal actions that were being taken. So, this is how the legal repository was created, which is made up of individual action folders. That is a folder that was open to the person who went to the Comité, then called Vicaría. It was opened by the social workers, [and contained] the detailed record of the whole situation that the person is living through, all the legal actions that are being presented in their favour, and all the social support that is given to them. Social, medical, welfare support.

And that information is from the moment the folder is created until the person stops going. There are people who went only once. And [it contains] information about their relatives too, which is very interesting, because there is an item, especially in the folders from the beginning of the Comité, in which [it] asks the person if they have relatives who have been objects of repression, [or] who have been detained, have been executed, or are disappeared. So the interesting thing about this registry is that there is information from people who did not receive attention from the Vicaría de la Solidaridad. I mean, some may have had, and some may not. So the important thing about that folder is the universe [of cases]. We have 47,000 folders under the name of a titular, but inside the folders, in many cases there is information about many more people, whether they received attention or not by the Vicaría. Which later was very important for the truth commissions that worked.

For example, the Valech Commission asked us background for example [of] Oriana. I went to the database and saw that there was absolutely nothing about Oriana. Then the Comisión sent me the context in which Oriana had been arrested [and] with which people she would have been detained. So, when we had information about the owners of the folders who had been arrested with Oriana, we were able to corroborate that she had actually been arrested.

And the same happens with children of victims who were absolutely invisible. For example, the writs of amparo were claimed for the parents. And [those were] the names of the owners of the folders. And then, you will go and check the writ of amparo, and find out that they had been arrested—Juan Pedro and his wife X, with their two children of five and two years, for example. So that contributed to verifying that indeed these children who had appeared in the commissions had been arrested with their parents. And the same applied to the detention folder.

CECILIA SOSA: So, in all the cases the names of different people cross each other?

MARITA: Exactly. I mean, you can cross-check the information, because on the one hand we have the judicial file, there are [also] the individual attention folders and there is everything that is in the archive repository... Let's see, part of the background of the judicial file are the individual attention folders. But, in addition, in the judicial file are the writs of amparo, the affidavits, the judicial processes (denunciations, quarrels), administrative requests.

I'm going to explain to you. I believe that the cases of detained-disappeared are what best represents what is content in the judicial file, because they have a greater number of documents. Because deep down, the judicial file shows the history of the repression, the history of the victims, of how the repressive organisms behaved. Because in the beginning, the documentation that is being copied is to find the people who were detained, alive. That was until 1978 when the Hornos de Lonquén were discovered. It was the first evidence that the detained-disappeared, who had been denied, many of them as juridical persons, that is, as if they had no legal existence, there it is proven that they had a legal existence, they had been arrested, they had been murdered, and they had been illegally buried so that their bodies would never be found again.

CECILIA SOSA: Sorry, but what's the name of the case?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Lonquén.

MARITA: The Lonquén case occurs in the month of November ’78. The furnaces were discovered through a complaint made to the Vicaría de la Solidaridad. So, for the detained-disappeared, and also for the people who had been arrested, it was necessary to ask the relatives for documentation, birth certificates, because they had no legal existence. That's why I refer to the case of the disappeared because they are the ones who have all the documentation. [Their relatives were asked for] birth certificates to prove that they actually existed, [they] were asked for certificates of grades, certificates of baptism.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: [inaudible min. 06:22]

MARITA: Of course, also the card that [proved that he] belonged to a football club. All the documentation that allowed [them] to corroborate the existence of that person. Also petitions, letters that were sent to different State agencies, [and] to different personalities that had influence in the country, asking them to let them know if they had been effectively arrested. And in cases where they were detained, [asking them if] they would help to free those people.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: What about the pictures Marita? Do the pictures of the detained-disappeared come from that time?

MARITA: The photos come from that time. For example, when complaints of ‘presumed misadventures’ or writs of amparo were filed, pictures of the person who had been detained often went [within the files].

ORIANA BERNASCONI: With that document.

MARITA: A picture was added. And in the case of the detained-disappeared when the groups of relatives of detained-disappeared began to operate, there are the pictures for the banners. And then, for example in the Hornos de Lonquén case, it was necessary to attach new documentation. For example, the Vicaría de la Solidaridad created the anthropomorphic form, which was a very important document, which fundamentally helped to recognize and to identify bones. Because in the anthropomorphic form is the physical information of the person—how tall the person is, how much they weigh, the colour of the hair, the colour of the eyes, what type of nose they have...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: About pregnancy…

MARITA: Of course, if it was a woman [it could tell] if she had been pregnant, if she had a caesarean section or natural birth. And also, for example, the relatives contributed with pieces of cloth from the clothes that the person was wearing when they were arrested, dental x-rays. At that time, the way to identify bones was through dental x-rays. They also [contributed by providing] chest and leg x-rays if the person had had fractures [of a bone]. Then, at the end, people became aware and provided all the medical information of each of the victims. All those antecedents that allowed for identification of the bones.

Well, and all that documentation was collected and systematized by the Vicaría at the time. Then, on the other hand, there are also many affidavits, from people who were victims and also witnesses of the arrest of a person. And those were antecedents that were contributed to the judicial processes. [Those were] victims who were with detainees who [later] became part of the detained-disappeared. For example, a person who [was released] from Villa Grimaldi, after his release went to the Vicaría and said: "Until yesterday I was with this person, and [that person] is detained in Villa Grimaldi" or "I saw [that person] arrested on that date".

One finds judicial processes in which there are people who were called to testify to the courts while being detained, to judicial proceedings brought by disappeared victims. That is, at that time there were antecedents. When today we collaborate with the justice department and we give them information, it is information that the courts already had. In other words, at that time, during the dictatorship there was no willingness to investigate, and the cases were dismissed due to lack of proof. The truth is because...

CECILIA SOSA: I got a little confused. How is it that they called people who were detained to testify?

MARITA: For example, there were cases of denunciation of ‘presumed misadventure’ due to cases of detained-disappeared...

CECILIA SOSA: As a way to make the detention visible...

MARITA: To investigate what happened to that missing detainee. Part of the background information that was… [inaudible min. 10.33] for example was an affidavit from a person who had been detained with him. And that person, at the time that the investigation was being carried out, was detained for example in Pirque, in a centre where women were detained. And the minister who had that case went to that detention centre and asked for a statement from the person who was detained.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: The statement was taken right there.

MARITA: It was taken in prison; it was taken in prison. Well…

ORIANA BERNASCONI: In other words, there were ministers who took statements during detention...?

MARITA: Yes, of course, in prison. I mean, for example there is one...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And, are those documents here?

MARITA: In the particular case of those documents ... There was a request from the Minister ‘en Visita’ in 1978, when the Minister Servando Jordán took the cases of several detained-disappeared and he asked different courts of the country to give him all the existing documentation [about those cases] that they were investigating of detained-disappeared. And you can find in the [inaudible min. 11.39 (folders?)] of the missing detainees, statements of people who were detained at that moment.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: When did that happen?

MARITA: It was found in the year ’78 but the causes are from before. For example, I did not work in the Vicaría, but I began to realize this when I had to respond to requests in which I delivered statements from people who had testified to the Minister Servando Jordán, and I had to contextualize in what investigation that person had testified.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Now? Is that nowadays?

MARITA: No, that was in the past. For example, I realized that there are cases in which this information is not taken [like if they were] the owners of the causes of the report of ‘presumed misadventure’. For example, [one case] calls my attention—once a person that I knew came, and reading [her information], she appears as "testifying" in a case, [but] she did not appear in the case, do you understand me? Because the cause was someone else's.

That's when I began to put the pieces of the puzzle together. And also, of course, in the case of Marieta Castro, who has her husband and mother missing. While she is detained in Pirque she testifies about her mother’s and husband’s cases, but she did not appear in that judicial process. Do you understand me? Those are things that one becomes aware of while [reviewing the cases]. Of course, it helped me a lot to have worked as an archivist for the first seven years I worked here. Because I had to know the archive very well.

So, then in the legal repository we have: sworn statements, both from victims and from witnesses who saw the arrests; witnesses who were in the detention facility next to the "titular victim"; also [statements from] all the administrative professionals; the letters that I was telling you about before which asked for the detainees to be released. [Letters from] many people, because they were needed to be eligible to benefit from the Decree Law 504 of expulsion—in other words, to change prison for exile.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Prison for exile.

MARITA: Yes, [change it] for exile. When they expel [a person] from the country.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: That Decree Law is from the year ’70 and…

MARITA: From … Oh! Those years! From ’75. Then, [we have] all the certificates that I was telling you about before that are of diverse nature, and the anthropomorphic form. What else? Processes of Military Justice, which are very important, because there are all the causes implemented by the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, and the Comité Pro Paz, of Consejos de Guerra. All the writs of amparo or habeas corpus writs. And the interesting thing about the legal repository is that it gives information about both victims that were assisted by the Vicaría and of victims who were not assisted by the Vicaría.

CECILIA SOSA: How are those cases?

MARITA: For example, in a ‘Consejo de guerra’, which was taken by the Vicaría de la Solidaridad and that attended three people. And that ‘Consejo de Guerra’ also processed, let's say 25 other people. Or let's do it the other way around, 25 [cases that were carried by] the Vicaría and 10 [that were not carried by] the Vicaría. But in the process, or the sentence, are the names of those victims not served by the Vicaría. So that information is useful for us to issue the certificate, to victims that were assisted [by the Vicaría] as well as those who were unattended, or to respond to requests from the victims who were assisted as well as from those who were not. The same applies to the writ of amparo, especially with the massive writs of amparo, writs of amparo for raids on populations, mass detentions and relegations, during the dictatorship.

Now, the interesting thing is that there is a database with the different documents, series, of the legal repository, which are sworn statements, habeas corpus writs, etc., [and] they are in the database by name. And each owner is remitted [there]. There are documents about it. So if the person has an habeas corpus writ, [and] has a military justice process, a criminal justice process, ten administrative petitions, all that information appears there.

For example, now they asked me to answer a request for 30 people, so I put together the document numbers, [and] I'm going to have to review about 450 documents that there are in total for them. Regardless of the fact that from those 450 documents that I review, I will not send everything to the Minister because not all of them will be useful for him, but [I'll send to him] those who serve him best.

Because also, for example, in the Vicaría a systematization was made of all the legal work that was done every month. And a monthly report was done. So the person also has a monthly report. [For example] the same person can appear in page five in the month of November of the year ’76, and later can [also] appear in twenty other monthly reports. It also refers me to the detention folder, and to the reception folder. For example, if a person was banned from entering the country, there are also lists of people published by the press, authorizing their return to Chile. Then I will have what date he was authorized [to enter the country] on. That is all the information about exile. Also [there is information] if a person was expelled with decree 504, or if the person left as a refugee. And if the person left as a refugee, [the document will say] in which place he was isolated and to which country he left, for example. Because we have a list of safe-conducts for people who left the country. They are the refugees, expelled, and I do not remember what [else], people who were given a safe-conduct.

CECILIA SOSA: Did you hand over safe-conducts?

MARITA: No, they were handed over by others, by the writs of amparo. But in the exile [folder] there is: exile, source that is in the safe-conducts, there are the detainees of 504, there are the authorized ones, I do not remember what else, but there are different ...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And that is a database that you built?

MARITA: All of this is in the database.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Did you build it?

MARITA: We built it.

CECILIA SOSA: This job is kind of like a handicraft work.

MARITA: Yes, very much a handicraft work, because what they do, and what we continue to do now, because this is a file that was closed in the year ’92 with information from the Vicaría and the Comité. The only thing that we are currently entering is an update of the judicial processes. And in many cases, we have the first part of everything that was researched and everything that the Vicaría took, and there it is entered the database. So, what was done? For example, [in] each document, for example [in] a case, [or a] sworn statement, there is the titular name of the sworn statement, and all the persons that are mentioned. So it gets together. And the sworn declaration has a code that is like the document's identity card. The same applies to each of the documents in the legal repository, except for the care folders, where only the name of the holder is. And that's why I was telling you that people who were not attended by the Vicaría were invisible, but they are mentioned, or there is information [about them] inside that folder.

For example, in a criminal justice process there are: the victim or the victims who were part of that process, all the people who testify, and all the people who testify in that process. So that allows us to be able to give certificates to people, except as I told you before, if it is a trial that began for example in the year ’92 or ’93, when the Vicaría closes. I was left with the complete process, I will not inform what was declared in that process, because there is no information from the Vicaría. And the Minister, for example, in the cases of Villa Grimaldi, will be investigating the same process, thus they have all the information.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: I'm sorry, I have a brief question, just to understand.

MARITA: I do not know if it's a bit confusing.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Was Villa Grimaldi a detention centre?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Yes, yes. The one that we’ll visit in the afternoon.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Excellent.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Of detention, torture and extermination.

MARITA: Well, and…

ORIANA BERNASCONI: The same as when you spoke about Pirque or Paine, what did you say about it?

MARITA: Pirque is a detention centre for women in Pirque. A prison centre of Pirque.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: You named those two. And the other thing is the press file ...

MARITA: Ah, well, the press archive of the whole period of the dictatorship until the year 1992 is there, organized by topic. The themes are digitized: Human Rights, church, abuses of power, emblematic cases, international. Why the international issue? Because [there] are all the denunciations to the United Nations, all the reactions of the UN agencies condemning the Chilean government, and our ultimate goal, in the end, is to have everything digitized. Since the year ’93 onwards, we have it organized until 2007 chronologically. And since 2007 it is digital. Now, what is most used...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Wait, from 2007 onwards it's digitized.

MARITA: It’s digitized. But what is most used is what was done before that year. And there are about 660,000 press cuttings.

CECILIA SOSA: How many?

MARITA: 660,000 press cuttings.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And were those press cuttings important for the truth commissions?

MARITA: It has been important for truth commissions; it is also important to respond to requirements.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: As the press was controlled by the government, if a person appeared there and was going to ask to be qualified as a victim of imprisonment and torture, the fact that a press report appeared in the Valech Commission, that was proof...

MARITA: Exactly, that it had been indeed. In the end, they provided as much background information as possible. And that press was also used a lot for television channels, for the media in general.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: For television series.

MARITA: For television series that have been done.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: They were used for the ‘Archivos del Cardenal’ TV series?

MARITA: As well. They occupied a lot, yes.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And these themes. Were those themes used from the beginning until now?

MARITA: From the beginning. No, not until now. Since ’93 onwards [inaudible min. 24.00.0].

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So… [inaudible min. 24.05] … from ’73?

MARITA: From ’73, since October of ’73…

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Until?

MARITA: Until December of ’92 by theme. Later chronologically, and by emblematic cases.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Oh, chronologically and by emblematic cases.

MARITA: Now, very general emblematic cases. From the year ’93 onwards. For example, Paine, Pisagua, Valech Commission. I do not know if Valech Commission?

CECILIA SOSA: Mainly the places?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: No, the emblematic cases are for example: Degollados, the Chancellor, when they kill the Chancellor in Argentina or in New York, cases...

MARITA: Big cases, that's emblematic cases.

CECILIA SOSA: It's interesting because in a first trip of this team, we travelled to Colombia, and the idea of the emblematic case, and all that process of ...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Does not exist. No, they do exist, but they are the massacres.

MARITA: But they are more general, I believe.

CECILIA SOSA: Oh, sure. Much more general, like for coding.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: At first they were massacres, or then they began to make reports on types of violence. So, for example they made a report of sexual abuse. Since there are so many, [and] the magnitude is so great, they classified it by subject.

MARITA: Obviously, obviously.

CECILIA SOSA: But that's thinking about how the nomenclatures overlap with differences.

MARITA: With great differences.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And the pictures Marita? The photographic archive?

MARITA: Well, the photographic archive is basically constituted by a photographic archive of the disappeared and executed detainees, and by the archive of the Solidaridad magazine. And the interesting thing about the archive of Solidaridad magazine, which goes from year ’76 to year ’92, is that it shows everything that happens in the country. I mean, it goes much further. It shows the history of the time, of the victims, of people who in that minute were ... this is going to sound wrong, people who were not so important [at that time] and then they were. For example, [Ricardo] Lagos, when he arrived nobody knew him. And there are pictures of him, of different human rights organizations, of civil society organizations.

There is a whole work of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad which is the least known, because generally what is known about the Vicaría is all that refers to the work of defence of human rights, all the legal stuff. And it is all that refers to the work of promoting human rights, all the social work that the Vicaría de la Solidaridad developed in the different areas of Santiago. For example: children's dining rooms, Labour Exchange for unemployed, holiday camps, which were holiday camps that were organized for the children of the neighbourhood inhabitants, who were taken to the beach. Different activities that were very important during that time. So the photographic archive gathers all the activities of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad.

CECILIA SOSA: Is the photographic archive made out of material that was specially brought here? That was owned?

MARITA: Material owned by the Vicaría, because there were photographers of the Solidaridad magazine, and their photographs are those that were published in the magazine. So we have the photographic negatives, we have the test strips, old strips. And the photographic archive is used a lot. Well, you have used it.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Yes.

MARITA: For publications, for reports, for films, especially for publications. And it has many requirements of international publications, of researchers, that is very remarkable.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: The magazine is owned by the Vicaría.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: The magazine was made by the Vicaría.

MARITA: The Vicaría de la Solidaridad did it. They had 300 issues. From the year ’76 to the year ’91. I think it was the year ’91.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: All the church channels in Chile.

MARITA: It's super important, it was published biweekly. It was one of the first media that reported, I think the first means of communication that reported what was happening in the country that did not come out in the other media. And it reached a distribution of 30,000 copies. And it was distributed through the church, in all the dioceses. It was sent abroad too. Another important thing…

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Do you have those issues?

MARITA: Yes, we have the whole collection.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And the nice thing is that they go narrating, they do the report on the economic situation, unemployment, poverty, all social problems which are a consequence of the neoliberal policies that the government installed. Then there is a part that has to do with human rights, they always talked about something ...

MARITA: Sure.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: It was not only: "This person appeared", no. It was much more than that. It has a component of social promotion and social education.

MARITA: Very important.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: I do not know if the pamphlets appeared there. When people were taught about their rights, to not let others take advantage of them, about labour rights.

MARITA: Exactly. Well, there is a very important thing about the Vicaría, and that is that along with all the denunciation and defence work, from the beginning it was conceived that there was also an educational task. So, as Oriana is saying, for example, during the protests leaflets about the writs of amparo were distributed. [In those leaflets it was explained:] what a writ of amparo was, in what situations should a writ of amparo be filed, where to go to present a writ of amparo. Then, for example, in Health [it was taught]: how to get rid of head lice? Just to give you an example. So, when children had head lice, what should be done with them? So, there are different topics, also some labour issues. There is a lot of material.

CECILIA SOSA: And how did you do it at that exact moment? Was the archive being built even during the dictatorship? Did you have any awareness that you were making a copy that was a unique one at that time?

MARITA: Absolutely. And they were very visionary, because why did they make the copy? Fundamentally to defend themselves and support all the legal actions they took. So that there would be no case that was not backed up with a trustworthy source. That is, [one] that did not appear in the press, because the government only wanted the Vicaría and the Comité to give false information. Something like: “they took Juan Pérez and Juan Pérez does not exist”.

CECILIA SOSA: So when you made copies it was also a way of protecting...

MARITA: Absolutely.

CECILIA SOSA: That is very interesting.

MARITA: It is a way of protecting yourself, to protect the work, [and] to provide it as proof. And the interesting thing is that all that documentation that was copied, nowadays serves as evidence and has served all truth commissions that have worked in the country. And not just for the truth commissions, but for all the reparative benefits that the victims have had. For example, there are families who ask for a certificate so that their grandson can avoid compulsory military service. And this happened a month ago. [There were] two cases of people who came to ask for certificates so that the grandson of the victim would not have to attend compulsory military service. Or so that people could avail themselves of health care benefits, [inaudible min. 32.33.5] or housing, etcetera.

Well, and I also think that it is very important all the contribution that it makes to all the recovery of memory work and all the education in human rights [work]. And we do a great job in that line. And we are extremely interested in making guided visits to children from schools, to universities.

We have signed agreements with the Universidad Católica, for internship programs so that students of archival courses of the Instituto de Historia come here to do internships. Students from [other] regions have also come to know the Archive. And we have made a very nice thing, which is, this year we commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Year of Human Rights. In 1978, Cardinal Silva Henríquez declared the Year of Human Rights.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: In the midst of the Dictatorship.

MARITA: In the midst of the dictatorship. That was a very important year. And it was also very daring to have declared the year of human rights [at that time]. And many activities were conducted during that year, for example, commissions with unions, with intellectuals, with politicians, with children, competitions were called for example, to design posters about human rights. And ended up with a symposium attended by personalities from different countries. And parallel to the symposium there was an exhibition of works of art donated by Chilean and foreign artists. An international exhibition was made, a serigraphic folder composed of 30 serigraphs was also made, and each represented an article of the universal declaration of human rights. And in this international exhibition, all the works that were donated to the Vicaría plus this serigraphic folder were exhibited. And it culminated with the symposium. And on November 5, there is a great celebration in the Cathedral of Santiago with the people who attended the Symposium, in which the Cardinal writes the letter from Santiago, which is basically a commitment to human rights. And also the human rights cantata was presented, which was made by Father Esteban Gumucio.

Well, and this year as we commemorated the 40 years we proposed to do three activities. One was the replacement of the cantata in the cathedral of Santiago, which was in the same place where it was presented at that time. And it was directed by Alejandro Guarello, who was the same director that...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Did that already happen?

MARITA: This year. Yes, it was in April. We are in February. No, it was in April.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So last year, 2018.

MARITA: Yes. Then, the cantata was performed. The cantata was reinterpreted with the same director who at that time was 25 years old, so for him it was very impressive. And the orchestra was an orchestra from Rancagua. Then, the second thing we set out to do was a project that consisted of making each one of the articles of the universal declaration of human rights in *arpilleras*. And to do that, we called five historical arpilleristas, some of them relatives of detained-disappeared, who had worked in the Vicaría de la Solidaridad. And five young arpilleristas who worked in "Trabajo para un hermano", which is a church organization I believe. Then each one of the arpilleristas made three arpilleras, and an exhibition was made in the month of May, in the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos. I am going to give you a catalogue of this. An exposition of the thirty articles was made.

CECILIA SOSA: That was in 2018?

MARITA: 2018. All that happened in 2018. The good thing about this project was that part of it was to buy the thirty arpilleras, to own this collection of arpilleras and make an itinerant exhibition with them. Well, this exhibition opens at the Museo de la Memoria, at the beginning of May, on May 7th. And the exhibition was displayed until the month of August in the museum.

And the third activity that we set out to do, which we also did together with the association of former staff of the Vicaría, with the culture team, was to mount the international exhibition again. And that exhibition was inaugurated last December at the Museo de la Memoria and is currently displayed, so you can go visit it. And it will be displayed until the month of April.

CECILIA SOSA: We’re going to see it.

MARITA: To own this collection of arpilleras has been very interesting, because we have been asked for the collection to be exhibited in different places. They asked for it from the Vicaría Pastoral Social to exhibit it on December 10th, which is the day of Human Rights, in the neighbourhood called ... I do not remember the name, where the San Pedro and San Pablo parish is located, in the La Granja commune, where the Sanctuary of Father Esteban Gumucio is, who was the one who made the cantata. It was exposed there.

Later, it was displayed for a week in a "Belén Educa foundation" school, which is located in the municipality of Cerro Navia. And that was very important to us. It was displayed to thousands of students of the school, and work was done with students of basic education and nursery, using each of the articles of Human Rights. It was a huge challenge for us, [because] we had guided tours with elementary school students, but what could we do with the children in pre-school education? Because the [inaudible min. 39.48.00] [institution?] that finances us, demands from us that we carry out our activity in education with students of nursery education. And this has been a very important means. The children drew the human rights that most attracted their attention. And it was very beautiful. For example, there were children who said: "What interests me the most is the right to rest, what I [most] like is the right to rest" [Laughs]. And another [said:] "The right to have a name". Because those are things that are more familiar to them, that are more within their reach.

Well, and one important thing about the arpilleras, is that we wanted them to reflect what it means today [in the 21st century], each of the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Because they have very different meanings. Different because during the dictatorship there were rights that at that time were represented in a very different way than they are understood today. For example, there is an article that is the right to privacy, which [in the current arpilleras] was represented with a drone.

Very interesting. Then there is another right, I am not saying how the exact article is, but it is the right to have a family. [The current arpilleras represented] the different families that exist today: mom and dad, mom and mom, kids, dad and dad and kids, single couples.

CECILIA SOSA: And the fact that you are based in an ecumenical place, how does it affect the type of material and the perspective with which the archive is worked?

MARITA: To us? You know what? We act as if we do not know. So, we do not give any explanation, we present it and that's it.

CECILIA SOSA: But there is no interference?

MARITA: No, none. We have never had. You know what? We have been very autonomous.

CECILIA SOSA: I find it very surprising.

MARITA: Very, very autonomous, in all the work we have developed. Formerly we worked in the same place where the archbishopric was, where the archbishop and the curia were. And we never had any problems of any kind. I mean, the only problem [that we had], but that actually was not a problem, was when the Valech Commissions worked.

CECILIA SOSA: What are the Valech Commissions?

MARITA: The Valech Commissions are the commission of political imprisonment and torture. Victims came to ask us for certificates. And in that time, before the Valech Commission it took us three days to provide a certificate. They were few, the certificates that were requested. And when the commissions started to work, we had to give people a number. We gave thirty numbers daily. And there were so many people that came. I mean, all the victims, victims who had been effectively arrested, had been in prison or had been relegated. There are different types of victims that were effectively qualified because they were not...

Specifically, what I want to tell you, [and] maybe you can explain it better judicially, is that among the victims who came to ask for certificates there were people who had been arrested for common crimes. And those people were relegated but administratively. We made a judicial process that... [inaudible min. 43.27]. For example, [they were arrested in] raids that were made after the coup, which was the year ’73. [Those were raids] in which they arrested people in neighbourhoods, and those who had a criminal record were sent relegated to Chacabuco. [A concentration camp during Pinochet’s regime].

So, many of those people, and the same happened in the ’80s, during the protests. They were also relegated. Many of those people who had been detained came to qualify as victims of political prison and torture. And what happened? That there were people, there must have been about three or four cases, that tried to steal in the archbishopric. So this was because of a computer. A claim was made for the number of people who were going and because somebody had tried to steal.

CECILIA SOSA: And was it seen as a deliberate act to boycott the work that the Vicaría was doing?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Because they were common criminals, right?

MARITA: No! Because they were just criminals. The thing is that they had a different criminal history. I mean, there are funny cases that I will tell you about later.

So I got a call from a person of the archbishopric who told me: "This is not the kind of public that the archbishopric serves". So I said: "Well, the Foundation was created to serve all the victims of the dictatorship, and because it was created by the archbishop it is a canonical body, so we have to support all the people who were served [in the past]. And these [people] were also victims, and therefore it is up to us to serve them”. Well, I did not have problems after that.

VIKKI BELL: I’m not getting this…

ORIANA BERNASCONI: The question was whether the archive and the whole process and the work was anyhow jeopardized by the dictatorship or now by the church. This being an archive of the Catholic Church, whether the church has anything to say or in the way their work now as an archive is being handled? And she says that they are being very autonomous in the way they do things. But the only trouble they had once it was that there were some victims that were in the process of qualification for the truth commission.

MARITA: Many of them were qualified.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Right. Before they were qualified as victims, they were accused of robbery. And while they were doing the registration in the Vicarage, in the former building, there were some attempts to rob some things, within the building. So that was the only time when the authorities of the church came to Marita to say: “What are you doing? This is not the proper audience of the Vicarage”. They complained.

VIKKI BELL: Ok.

MARITA: But it must have happened three times, it was not more than that. But, especially the secretaries at the reception were scared. And [to get to the office] you had to go up three floors, so [the people] had to go through all the offices of the archdiocese. I think that if we had been on the first floor it would have been less. The person who was caught stealing the computer, when I knew who it was, because they had to fill out a form to ask for a certificate, I wrote in the folder: "They were caught trying to steal the certificate from the chief journalist of the department of communications. " And it was like that.

Well, and it was very unbelievable because this happened in the first Valech Commission, which I believe was in 2004. And when the second Valech Commission was made, [in] 2010 a social worker arrived requesting background information from a person who was detained in Colina 2. Colina 2 is a detention facility where common criminals are held. Well, criminals in terms of human rights are also held in there. And we had to request that we give certificates only to people with the authorization of the owner. And with a photocopy of their identity card and everything. So [the social worker] came with an authorization, the person did not have an identity card, but when I went to see the file, I realized that it was the same person who... no! and it is true, [it was the same person] that had requested the certificate in the first Valech Commission. And what must have happened is that while asking for the certificate, the first Valech Commission could not issue it, so he could not be qualified, and [he] absolutely qualified because he had been relegated to Chacabuco. Well.

VIKKI BELL: I had a question, I try to remember… Oh, the question was about whether anybody ever came to the archive to want to take back the information? You know?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Yes. They come here and they make copies.

VIKKI BELL: Yes, no, no. But to remove the information.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Is there any victim or family member who has come to the archive to request their information, and that the information that is here about their case has been deleted from the file?

MARITA: No! Never! Never, never. Never deleted.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: [For example:] You have the process of my case, and I come and tell you: You know what? I do not want the world to know about my case, I would like to ask you to...

MARITA: I mean, there was a very interesting case that happened to us, in the year ’98, when Carmen was [here], because I remember that...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Before Pinochet's arrest.

MARITA: It might be, but it has nothing to do with that. But, a person who was a former political prisoner and that had given a sworn statement in the year ’92 or ’91 came. Between the years ’90 and ’92 she had made a sworn statement to a lawyer of the Vicaría, and she wanted us to eliminate her sworn statement. And she wanted to deliver a new sworn statement. And what we did was to take out that sworn statement, [and] receive the new one. However, that sworn statement was placed in each folder of the detainees, of each detained-disappeared in which she testified or mentioned in her statement. And it had already been sent to court. So what we said to her was: what has already been sent to the courts cannot be [eliminated]. But we are committed today to show the public this new sworn statement. It is the only case.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And are there people who have said: "you can keep it, but you cannot show it to the public"?

MARITA: I mean; do you know what happens? It’s that there are cases in which we effectively consult people if they want us to show it or not. And, if there is authorization from the person to be shown there is not a problem, except for the courts of justice, because we deliver everything to them. Everything that we have.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: She does not deliver a copy; she delivers ...

MARITA: No! It is a copy.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: You deliver a copy?

MARITA: Yes, everything is a copy.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Ah, so when you say what's in the document, do you [make a] copy of it?

MARITA: No, not in the case of the folders. I make a report of what is in the folders, a textual report. Because the folders contain information that does not contribute to justice. Because, for example, the judicial is contained in the writ of amparo, in the sworn statement, [and] in other different documents that are delivered to the courts. [But] the information contained in the folder is often about social care. Except when they request from me the social or health care information. [In those cases] I write to the Minister, for example: "The person was treated by the psychiatrist on that date". And why do I do it? Because the owner is the one who filed the complaint. I mean, I do not have any restrictions there. But I give a copy. What is complicated is when the victims come and ask for their folder. Because the folder cannot be shown to the lawyers or the victims. That is like a directory rule.

CECILIA SOSA: It can't be shown?

MARITA: It can't be shown because there is a lot of confidential information in the folder. That was either delivered by the victims or by relatives. And in addition there is information about other people.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: There are also [in the folders] the visions of the social workers about the patient, I mean about the victim.

MARITA: No. It's very complicated. I mean, I cannot tell you.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: But they cannot see their folders?

MARITA: They cannot see their folder; they cannot see their folder. And many times you find yourself...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So the victims are given only their writ of amparo, their complaints, everything, the news, the press.

MARITA: Everything, everything, everything, but not their folder. And that is a rule. Because there are folders in which the social worker made observations that say: "I do not believe him", "He is lying", "It is not appropriate for the case to be attended by the Vicaría". Because the Vicaría did not attend to cases that were called "hecho de sangre" (Act of blood). That were, for example: to kill a policeman, or the people who attacked Pinochet. They were taken care of the first time they went, but then they were referred to other organisms like CODEPU or FASIC, who assisted those type of cases. Because the Vicaría de la Solidaridad had as its principle the right to life.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So when during the eighties, one of the wings of the left began to arm itself, CODEPU is created, because the Vicaría did not assist those types of cases. The Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez.

MARITA: I did not assist those cases. [inaudible min. 54.49] The Lautaro.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: They still provide them some assistance.

MARITA: It provides them initial care, but then referred them.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: [inaudible min. 55.00] Let's see? Because you have...

MARITA: No, but it does not matter, I do not care. I do not know what else are we missing, you know what we do.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: I think it became clear that the main use of the Archive now is to be a source. That is, the Archive has changed. Since it is an Archive, first it feeds the truth commissions. The Rettig Commission, which is the first commission created in ’90. The Rettig Commission is created three months after the election of the first democratic president. It was the Commission of Truth and Reparation that is for disappeared and executed political prisoners. And then there are the commissions in charge of the cases of imprisonment and torture, which is what we call the Valech Commission, but it's called the National Reparation Commission, etcetera, etcetera.

So, a main function of the Archive has been to provide evidence to these processes of transitional justice. Which are intended for the State to qualify who are the victims of the dictatorship, and provide them reparation, different kind of reparations, for them and their families.

And then there's ... We made a book, and all that is in the book [Laughs]. We made a worksheet with Marita. The other great use of the archive is the judicial use, which is what Marita was talking about: "The judge asks me for...". Then, all the ongoing causes ask for information from human rights organizations.

MARITA: I think that there is one thing I want to add that is very important. And it’s that there is an increasing trend, which is explosive! And it is that before, the causes investigated by the Ministers were about disappeared and executed prisoners, and today they are mainly about surviving victims. And they are surviving victims who have filed complaints for illegal detention, torture, unlawful coercion, kidnapping. And there are victims who present them individually and others who present them collectively. And they can also present them in the two [ways]. For example, AGA victims, who are people who were detained in the air force war academy. Which I think were 32. Or victims of Villa Grimaldi. And it can happen that one of these victims may also present his complaint individually.

CECILIA SOSA: And why is that? How would you analyse the change in the imaginaries?

MARITA: In other words, it is the search for justice.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: [inaudible min. 57.55.9] this was also triggered by the Commission. [The fact that] people went to the Commission, and ok, there is truth, now [we can have] reparation.

MARITA: I mean, there was already a relationship with the Valech Commission, because there are still...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: No, I'm talking about the Commission.

MARITA: Ok, the one about prison and reparation.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Of course.

MARITA: And the other thing is that there are also people among the victims... There are two things, you made it clear to me once: there are victims that were recognized by the Valech Commission, and victims who were not recognized by the Valech Commission, and that they would have qualified. [But] they did not show up. I think the consulates worked very badly. Because people have come, who were for example in Venezuela, and they didn't have any idea that the consulate had received [cases]. I believe that the work that was done abroad was misinformed, the work of the commission that received testimonies to be able to qualify people.

And another thing is that people who were not qualified, who have no reason to be qualified, file complaints just in case. There are also many victims and people who come to ask for certificates, because they believe that a new Valech Commission will be opened.

CECILIA SOSA: But this is like, in relation to what we saw in Colombia as well, like to take advantage a bit from the system, and see if somehow I can have some level of repair, or this would be...

MARITA: No. There are also, there are also.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: I mean, obviously the trials also led to monetary reparation. Of course, one of the forms under repression... So, there is a curious thing...

MARITA: Now, the ones that lie are just a few, you ultimately realize, they are very few. That is, I believe that if one made a graph, the proportion of the ones that lie would not appear in relation to all the qualified victims. [It is] minimal.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Then something curious is happening, and this is the article that we have to publish now, that I told you about in Colombia. [And it is] that there is documentation that was created during the dictatorship on imprisonment and torture, which is preserved in this file or in others, which served to qualify the person in the truth commission of the State. Then that person has requested that folder, because ultimately the truth commission is another process. There are computers, they made a database, they triangulated information by detention centre. So there is a whole information processing that allowed for making information crossings for cases of imprisonment and torture, that the Vicaría had never been able to do. [This was done] for the disappeared and executed detainees who were less. Especially, for the detained-disappeared that there were like [inaudible min. 1.00.55].

MARITA: I mean, the Vicaría could've also done it, it’s by centre and everything, but ...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Ok, but it is not the same as a database with all the information of the Vicaría, of all the organisms, of FASIC, of all the prisoners. In other words, the Truth Commission was a moment of gathering all this information that was broken up into different files of human rights organizations. People, because the victims are survivors, went to testify as well. That is, there is a new declaration, then it is a great collection of documentation that is created in those two moments. And that database, that of the Valech I Commission, is under secrecy for fifty years.

MARITA: Fifty years.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So what qualified and unqualified victims are doing is asking for their folders. You can ask for your folder for that. They ask for their folders and use it to file the complaint. So that's it, that's how the information has been taken care of. And that is happening now. There, it's in the article. One hundred folders or one hundred and fifty.

So now, the Human Rights Institute, which is another transitional institution created not long ago, 2010? It is the one in charge of taking care of and spreading, that seems very absurd, the archive of the Valech Commission, of the truth commissions. It can't spread it because it's under...

MARITA: Under secrecy.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: But yes. Then the person in charge of copying this file is in the cellars of the Museum of Memory. So they go, they copy, they digitize, they are digitizing it. Eventually, they told us that, they go digitalizing, and as the victims go asking for the folders, they give them a copy of the file.

MARITA: Hey, forgive me, I have to do a very important thing.

VIKKI BELL: I wonder if this is a point were Marita might have said on reflection that the way in which the archive was produced, or the information was [inaudible min. 1.03.04] if they would have done it differently. You know?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: But you can ask but she would say that they are very proud of having preserved the archive as it was.

VIKKI BELL: Yeah, but I’m just thinking of a question like: If you would do it again… You know? If you would give advice to another organization, not an archive but another organization, collective organization… Is there something in this issue, the information belonging to the Vicaría and the cross-referencing in a… I mean I don’t know what the answer is but is there a lesson for somebody else here? Because I think people are proud of what they have done. And obviously in Colombia as well, there is a pride in the centre that is difficult to get people to reflect more. But is there anything that you did that you think actually you probably shouldn’t [Laughs]?

JAIME: I'm going to the bathroom [he leaves the room].

VIKKI BELL: I know there was a certain sadness for some people, the closing of the Vicaría. Maybe this is also something that is interesting, this question. Should this project be final or should it go forever? You know?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: There is a discussion, well she can tell us, when the Vicaría decided to close in 1992. The organization of the relatives of victims, they felt like left behind.

VIKKI BELL: Abandoned.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Yeah, abandoned. So on the one hand, they understand that this stuff should be taken by the state [inaudible min. 1.05.18]. We were created here, by you and now we are left alone.

VIKKI BELL: The transitions are interesting.

[Marita comes back]

ORIANA BERNASCONI: We have three questions that are more reflective. This project it’s about...

MARITA: I'm going to smoke a cigarette, it doesn't matter. But I can smoke by sticking my head out.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: No, because we're recording you. If you are going to smoke…

[Laughs]

MARITA: No, tell me.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Very short. This project is also trying to draw lessons from the different archives in different countries on having done this process of registering, of filing, of disseminating, the stories about what happened. So the first question would be: looking back at this whole process, [we know that you] were not in the first stage, but you arrived in a minute, and you have been since ’93, for a very long time. Then you have a vision of the archive and its potentialities, its capabilities, its limits. Then, if you can do like a review of lessons that can be drawn from the way in which you have worked. In the Comité, in the Vicaría and in FUNVISOL regarding the Chilean case. Lessons that may be useful for other institutions that in the future, or at this minute, are registering these type of events: political violence...

MARITA: I believe that the work that was done is spectacular.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: But what would you highlight? What do you think was its strength?

MARITA: I mean, I believe that, first, the greatest value that it had is that it recorded and documented everything as the events happened, [and] not after they occurred. [So] it was not needed to collect documentation later. That's it. And in that minute that helped to take all the legal actions, [and] everything that was necessary to do in favour of all the victims. And that had consequences that last until this day. I think that is invaluable. I mean, it really has a value. Because I imagine [what it means] that a Minister receives today the sworn statement that a person made in the minute of being arrested or having just left the detention. A letter from the year 75 is different from one that a person makes in democracy. Or even while the Vicaría was working, from year 90 to 92. I mean, I think it has another value.

CECILIA SOSA: The immediacy and urgency with which… [inaudible min. 1.08.21.0]

MARITA: Of course, without detracting from the declaration of the year ’90 or ’92. But I think that it adds more weight, because it is contemporary.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: What else?

MARITA: That is it. Then, the way in which the information was processed. I think that it has a value, because I always say, it is as if from a book one would take out the words. If you take out: here it is done, in each document information was taken from the victims. In that for example, there is one thing that comes to me now, that should have been done, [and] it was not always done, [only] it was done in the 90's. But I believe that the thing that we need to think about is that the Vicaría and the Comité worked against the clock. The [most] urgent thing was to find the detainees alive, that was [the only important thing], they worked absolutely improvising. Furthermore, no one imagined that a coup d'état was going to produce the horrors it produced and that it would last 17 years.

So what things for example should be done thinking about countries that are building databases, or processing information? First, I believe that it is very important to include an item in some part of the sworn declarations, that register if [the person] is a complainant or if it is a person that appears named in the declaration. Because, for example, I can have fifteen sworn statements where Juan Perez appears, but he is [only] one complainant. And of those fifteen [sworn statements], sometimes you lose time reviewing the other fourteen. And even in some of them, maybe what I'm saying is very specific, the processing of the information is as delicate as it is processed, that suddenly there are statements that say: ‘He heard that Juan Pérez saw it.’ Then that cannot help me. I believe that the thing about the complainant is important.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Wait, complainant. And what would the other categories of people be?

MARITA: They would be victims, victims mentioned. This is how I translated it.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Ultimately it’s the owner, and the others are those “who were with me”.

MARITA: The owner. Sure, exactly. I mean, that there is a reference to the owner of the document. And the same goes for all that one... differentiate between owners and victims.

In other words, there must be an item that shows who is the owner and who the victims are. Even if it is in a single answer. When that document is used it will work. [For example] I mention to the Minister. I say [to him]: ‘In the sworn declaration of this person, it is mentioned that he was detained along with her. But there are times when it does not [appear].’ For example, when they talk about party structures. Then [sometimes they say]: "This man militated along with me", but they do not make any reference to the detention. I think that [it would work] for that kind of thing.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And there is another question that Vikki had that is very good, which refers to the impact of the closure. Because in the end the Vicaría closed and was transformed into this file. So, let's think, imagine that in the future there is an agency that does the same job of recording violence as it happens. So, think about what is happening in Colombia [now], where there are a lot of commissions, of instances to register, to systematize, to make databases, to integrate data. And of course, this system is created, and what about the closure? What was the impact generated by the closure of the Vicaría in the Human Rights world?

MARITA: Oh! It was very difficult, very difficult. That is, from the staff themselves, to the people who believed that the Vicaría had to keep working. And the criterion for the closure was that the Vicaría and the Comité had existed in a state of emergency. That is, in a situation of violence, of dictatorship, [the Vicaría] had to assume functions that correspond to the State, such as ensuring human rights of the people. That's why it closed.

And what was done was very interesting, and that is that when the Vicaría closed, for example, the pending judicial processes were transferred to Human Rights organizations. They were transferred to the FASIC, fundamentally to FASIC. Then, to continue with all the social area that the Vicaría had, the Vicaría Pastoral Social was created. Afterwards, [to continue with] the whole craft thing, which began with the crafts that the political detainees made, to be able to market them and be able to help their families, the Fundación Solidaridad was created.

I mean, I believe that there should be responsible agencies ... I believe, and this is my opinion and maybe I'm totally wrong, but I hope they were [agencies] that were independent from the States. Because the States are very fragile and you never know what is going to happen with the democracies in different countries. In other words, I really believe that [there should be] organizations that take care of all the judicial part of the institution. And [at the same time] instances are created, or organisms in charge of channeling the different programs that the institution has. I believe that this is very important so that there is continuity and the victims are not left helpless.

VIKKI BELL: Did the Vicaría have some events for the victims at that point to discuss this?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Did the Vicaría have at some point during the closing, like an event or activities with the victims to discuss the closing process?

MARITA: I mean, I do not know if there was a discussion, but I know there were many closing activities. I have no idea. I think that you should ask María Luisa, because she was the one who closed the Vicaría.

And the other thing that happens until today, is that people believe that the Vicaría still exists. And they come here because they want to file a recurso de amparo, [and] for different reasons. To this day, 25 years have passed, no, like 28 years, how much? ’90? They are going to be almost 29 years old. And people still believe that the Vicaría exists. And the other thing is that in the collective memory of the people who were detained, everyone believes that they went to the Vicaría, and they have gone to other institutions. They went to the Comisión Chilena de Derechos Humanos, or they went to CODEPU, but they believe that we have all the documentation.

And not only that, some guided tours from schools have gone to the Plaza de Armas square [were the Vicaría was located at the beginning], thinking that we are there. And also the people who believe that the Vicaría exists come ... [inaudible min. 1.16.28.5].

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And is there an error that was committed and that should not be allowed? In the elaboration of the process, on how it was registered, how it was documented.

[Noises in the background interrupt the conversation]

MARITA: Better? I don’t know.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Is there something that should have been done better? [Something] that was omitted, that was not done.

MARITA: What I think was omitted were those things [that I mentioned before], but deep down, they were just details. For [the work] that was done, I believe that...

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Things that for example today's technology would allow to do, that for example, could not be done before.

MARITA: That is, for example, with the entire photographic file it should have done the same thing that was done with the legal file, organize it in databases. Because we really had to ..., we're going to have to do it at some point.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Organize it.

MARITA: Yes, organize the photographic archive, for example, [classify] what are test strips, or negatives. There is going to be a database that gathers all the information. That is a pending task, for example. And that should have been done.

Well, I think [it's because] at that moment I think that you worked with what was needed. In the end, what I realize, is that the work of the Vicaría was done based on requirements. And it was the same thing that happens to us, in terms of customer service. We give priority to the requests that people have. For example, if I am answering a request and a person comes in who urgently needs a certificate because he has an appointment with the doctor tomorrow, [we] make the certificate. We do what the Vicaría did. In the Vicaría, above all, there was a disposition of the people who worked there, a great commitment.

There is one thing that I did not say before, and that I think was very important in the Vicaría, and that is that the role played by social workers was fundamental. Usually the work of lawyers is more valued socially speaking, but the work that the social workers developed... I mean, without the work done by the social workers, I believe that the lawyers could not have done a quarter of the work they did. Because the social workers were not only the first filter, or the first attention that was given to the victims, but they also developed a work of emotional support with the victims' families. The social worker was the one who accompanied the families when they had to go to recognize the body of a murdered person. They were the ones who maintained permanent contact with family members. And they established a link that continues to this day between them. I do not know, what else.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Maybe we can talk about them. I have read the interviews we gave to them. Sometimes it’s like...

MARITA: Are you talking about victims?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: No, I'm talking about the staff of the Vicaría. The social workers say that in the [new] organizations, in the institutions created during transitional justice, the spirit of assistance at the moment of attending to the victims and the concern for the other has been lost. I'm talking about this "ethos" that was in the [old] organisms. And of course, given the urgency, when the enemy is around...

MARITA: Of course! They were trying to save the people's life. I mean, there are cases in which you say: how did they mentally survive to face it?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Yes, and without many forms of self-care, because the staff worked between 13, 14, 20 years.

MARITA: María Luisa worked here since the year ’73.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And you say: Well, we have a way of caring, right? Someone who is supporting you, listening.

CECILIA SOSA: And never... [inaudible min. 1.20.01] Of course, but all the people who worked in the Vicaría, did not suffer any attack.

MARITA: No, it did happen. For example, there is the case of José Manuel Parada, who was head of the Analysis Unit of the Vicaría, who was murdered. He belonged to the communist party, and worked from the beginning in the Comité Pro Paz and then in the Vicaría. At that time, he was doing a research based on a statement made by an agent [of the dictatorship] who had defected. Parada was confronting that statement with documentation that had been provided by a former detainee of the same agency to which the agent belonged. And the two of them were killed and their throats cut. And then there was a process against the Vicaría de la Solidaridad. Well, all the staff who were arrested in the Comité, which ended with the closure of the Vicaría.

And then, in the late 1980s, there was a process by a military prosecutor against the Vicaría de la Solidaridad. And what happened on that occasion was that a person who had been shot went to the Vicaría. He said he was going through a place and was shot. And what had really happened was that he had participated in an assault on a bakery where one person died, but he did not say it. And he was helped by the chief lawyer of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad and by the doctor of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, and they took him to the Chiloé clinic, which was a clinic that had an agreement with the Vicaría, to assist all the people who were injured during the protests. And that led to a trial against the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, which was led by a prosecutor who did an investigation against the Vicaría and asked for the medical records of the Vicaría, that were not provided under cover of professional secrecy. This meant that the lawyer had to spend about six months’ [as a] prisoner, and the doctor more than a year.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: And what happened to the medical records?

MARITA: They never knew where the medical records were. And Monsignor Valech, who was the Vicar at that time and is a very interesting person because he was a right-wing person, said: Over my dead body, and I rather to go to prison, but I will not hand over the records, and I don't know where they are. And indeed he did not know where they were. In other words, he told a person from the Vicaría: You take charge of them and do not tell me anything else. This is how it happened.

CECILIA SOSA: And are the medical records part of the archive?

MARITA: Yes, they are part of the archive, of course they are. The medical records are here, they are digitized, and everything.

And that is another very important thing. When you ask me: What recommendations would you give? One recommendation that I would make that I think is key, is that when we started to digitize we did it to protect the documentation from deterioration by the use of the public. That was our goal. Now I give you a recommendation: digitize everything, because it is very important not only to protect it from the public, but to protect it from a fire in the building, and from the use that one gives to the documentation. In the past when we answered a request, when we delivered certificates, when we helped researchers, when people requested documents from the legal file, we had to go and look for each document that was needed, take it from the folder where it was, and select whether it was useful or not. You could find a tremendous number of documents, you photocopied the ones that were needed, to hand it over later to the Minister, or to make a certificate, or to deliver it to the public, because it was necessary to select which ones were given to the public, to the researcher, or which was confidential and which was not. And today one keeps everything on an external hard drive. You see the database, see what documents you have, print them, and that's it. It's done. And besides, you keep external hard drives in other places. So it is a very important shelter, very important.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: In Colombia we saw that some of the cases of human rights violations were very associated to territories, to places, to parts of the country, did something similar happen here? Or more, because I understand that the territorial issue ...

MARITA: No. It also happened here. There are emblematic territorial cases. I do not know if I answered it.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: That are associated [to territories]. That is not Santiago de Chile.

MARITA: Of course, of course. For example, there are cases of detained-disappeared from Bío Bío [region], detained-disappeared in [inaudible min. 1.26.10.5] in the south of Chile, in Mulchén, detained-disappeared in Valparaíso. The "Caravana de la Muerte" crossed all the country.

In Paine, for example, there is a lot of repression. That may be related to the case of Guatemala, but what do I know. In Paine there are many victims in retaliation for having been peasants that in the past were inserted in the agrarian reform processes. These are cases in which the latifundistas, as revenge, made lists of their own tenants, of their own workers. The same happened in factories where workers were exterminated. Now, perhaps the owners did not think they were going to exterminate them, but they did want them to be detained and retaliate for their participation in the Unidad Popular period.

Now, Chile is a [different] country, one can see it in the figures [of victims]. Because the massacres that took place in Colombia have nothing to do with those that occurred in Chile.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: From my perception, many of them are associated with people, but through a strong association to sites, geographical areas, rivers, for example. It blows my mind what they told us about a river [inaudible min. 1.27.48.0]. In fact, I'm not sure if it is a State or another thing, it [a river] is being a subject of repair. The river! Because that is where they voted the… [inaudible min. 1.28.0]

MARITA: Oh, how nice.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Nature also suffers.

MARITA: Well, here it also occurs. I mean, it is not the same, but we have memorials. Throughout the whole country. But how lovely.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: But it is assumed that, deep down, here we know less about what happened in the rural sectors. I do not know if Maria Luisa told you.

MARITA: The thing is that when there are emblematic cases, or when there are massacres, or mass disappearances, those cases are known. María Luisa Sepúlveda, who worked since the beginning in the Comité Pro Paz, and closed the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, says that she was absolutely shocked about the massive presence of repression throughout the whole country. Especially in regions. [There were places] where there was no knowledge [of what happened]. In rural places. But that happened with victims of political prison and torture.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Did that became known with the Comisión Valech?

MARITA: With the Comisión Valech.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: With the [Commission] Valech 2,000 to 2,100 detention sites were reached. Not with the ... [inaudible min. 1.29.01].

MARITA: That's why it was a pending debt with all the surviving victims.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: But today, how does this foundation get resources to function?

MARITA: From the State. Currently from the State. And before we did projects, but now the bulk is of the State.

JAIME HERNÁNDEZ: Because in Colombia, Oriana mentioned it already, there is a situation of uncertainty. Basically about who moves the resources. Because behind that there is a theme of orientations, even if they are implicit. Especially because, how are these entities sustained? In Colombia, the main centre for registration or archive of this subject belongs to the State. And in the last governments, we understand that worked more or less well because there was independence even though it belongs to the State.

Now, with the new government, which is different to the prior, there is an uncertainty basically because apparently the current government wants to interfere or influence the work. So when Cecilia asked the question of the religious theme, the Vicaría, etc., it makes me reflect on it. Likewise, the sites have to be assigned to some place, they cannot be in the air. There is always a predominant role, right?

So, me and Oriana, we work in universities of the Compañía de Jesús, and in a certain way I understand, I do not know about you, that we still have autonomy to develop our research work, etcetera, but we know that there is an authority behind us.

I'm sorry to make this comment now because when I went to the bathroom I lost the train, I had not seen it. In other words, there is a large umbrella here, behind, that although it does not impact on the daily activities it is there. So, I do not know if it's a question or more as a reflection. Before, and now, there is a subject that is behind it. Because in a certain way, one is not consciously working it all the time, but it's there, right? And suddenly it guides the actions and the decision-making in a certain way.

MARITA: Now, I believe that the Vicaría and the Foundation had a lot of legitimacy in the country, and with the truth commissions, it had even more value. Because while it is true, during the dictatorship, everyone who belonged to the dictatorial world was against the Vicaría, and considered them communists, today, I believe that there are very few people who do not recognize human rights violations. That what happened, actually happened. So, that makes the Vicaría today take its rightful place. That, on the one hand.

And, on the other hand, the legitimacy that [the Vicaría has] for the victims, the legitimacy that it has before the human rights organizations, before society, I believe that it makes us a "plus" for the church to have us. That is my opinion. Especially today, and this cannot be said anywhere, when the Chilean church has been so questioned. That is, it descends in the polls, it went so down! So, I believe that one of the few capitals that has, and that is very important, was the work developed by the Vicaría de la Solidaridad against the dictatorship.

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Marita, I never asked you this question before, how do you see [the future]? What do you all talk about? The commission has an advisory council, what do they talk about the future of this foundation? What do you imagine that the foundation will be doing? In other words, the generation that was the protagonist of these events is dying. So, how do you see the role of this archive and this foundation in the face of this new generation, which basically does not have direct experience with the horror [that happened]? In the end you have this intention to transmit to them, to spread, to promote, the values that will continue to govern the principles of the organization. But you have to do it in another way perhaps. What are you thinking about the work of this organization in ten more years?

MARITA: That is, I believe that the most important thing is all the work in terms of "cross-generational" memory of victims, I do not know if it is called "cross-generational" of victims? Everything that is education in Human Rights. Everything that post-memory means, I think that is very important. For example, guided tours for us are essential.

CECILIA SOSA: Guided tours around the archive.

MARITA: Around the file. And, well, it's a personal matter of mine, but I care a lot when people whose families were unaware of all this come [to the archive]. I mean, I love when people from the Universidad de los Andes who are from Opus Dei come [here]. I love when students from the Universidad Finis Terrae that belongs to the Legionnaires come [here]. More than the Universidad Alberto Hurtado [students]. What happens is that the Jesuits form people who, most of them, already know what happened. These other young people may not have any idea. That is, I think many do not even know what the Vicaría de la Solidaridad was. And I try to be very "gimmicky," it can be called. I always show them a PowerPoint, and if they are students from private schools, I show them detained-disappeared children, children executed that were their age. The same thing I do with college students. Trying to bring this reality closer to them, so that it makes more sense to them. Or I show them: "look, he was detained here on Avenida Ossa". I mean, to have more… So it doesn't appear......

ORIANA BERNASCONI: So distant.

MARITA: So distant. In other words, I believe that the work of education in Human Rights and of memory is very important. I believe that the arpilleras are going to help us very much. The right to life, the right to work, the right to asylum, migrants today, connect people with new problems of human rights violations that occur in different countries. That is, what I insist the most when children come is to say: You are younger, but I had to live at that time, and it was terrible because no one could discuss [things].

In other words, you were absolutely stigmatized because you had a left-wing orientation, or because you had a right-wing orientation, [or because] you were [in favour of] the dictatorship, or you were not [in favour of] the dictatorship. I stopped seeing many of my friends, classmates, because I had a left-wing orientation, you know? For me was terrible to hang out with them because they said: "No, the disappeared just left with I do not know who". Those were very difficult everyday issues.

So I think it's important to encourage [young people] that they have to respect people who think differently, they have to respect, I do not know, different sexual options, different races, immigrants who come to the country seeking refuge. Because it turns out that we were received in many countries. I do not know; I think that you have to adapt to the current [scenarios].

Now, I think it's very curious [what happens with] the file, because when this file was created, it was thought that it would last two years, however, the causes of human rights violations that are being investigated have gone increasing. And I believe that it will continue to increase, because I do not believe that 38,000 political prisoners who were qualified presented complaints, but there are many who have presented! So I think we will have work for very long time. Which I love because you say: if this archive is not used it’s worth nothing. Why would you have an archive that nobody visits, that nobody requires your documentation?

ORIANA BERNASCONI: Should we go?

MARITA: Let’s go.

The interview finishes.

\* \* \* \* \*