



## ITP Research Form 2006

ITP: **ITP Argentina**

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Paper Title: **Argentina's Dirty War**

Abstract:

This year marked the thirtieth anniversary of the start of Argentina's Dirty War, a period of state sponsored violence that resulted in the torture, murder and forced disappearance of at least 30,000 people.<sup>1</sup> While the country has been dealing with the fallout of this troubling period of history since 1983, only recently has the government prioritized the prosecution of human rights abuses from the Dirty War. In 2005, President Kirchner repealed two important amnesty laws preventing prosecutions of Dirty War criminals. Thus, the timing was perfect for our research into the political, legal and social ramifications of the repeal of the amnesty laws and the start of prosecutions of human rights abusers.

In Part I of this paper, we discuss the causes of the Dirty War and recount the atrocities committed during that time period. In Part II, we explore Argentina's legal response to the human rights abuses, focusing on the creation and later repeal of the amnesty laws. In Part III, we evaluate Argentina's legal response from an international law perspective. Furthermore, we survey the opinions of the Argentine people to the government's repeal of the amnesty laws. We conclude that Argentina is now taking the necessary steps to align itself with international human rights norms and to bring closure to victims and their families. However, only the future will show whether the truth about the crimes committed during the Dirty War will ever be discovered or if it will remain a secret that will be "desaparecidos" as is the legacy of so many victims of the Dirty War.

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Mann, *Macabre New Details Emerge About Argentina's Dirty War*, March 23, 1996, available at <http://www5.cnn.com/WORLD/9603/argentina.war/>.