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Ex-Spy Chief of Colombia Is Sentenced to Prison

By **SIMON ROMERO**

RIO DE JANEIRO — Jorge Noguera, Colombia's former spymaster, was convicted on Wednesday of collaborating with paramilitary assassination squads and sentenced to 25 years in prison for his involvement in the 2004 murder of a prominent sociologist.

The ruling by Colombia's Supreme Court was the latest blow to the country's troubled intelligence agency, the [Administrative Department of Security](#), which has struggled with a [long-simmering scandal](#) over its espionage activities, including collusion with right-wing militias and illegal wiretapping of government critics.

The tactics used by the intelligence agency have cast doubt about its operations under former President Álvaro Uribe, who has staunchly defended Mr. Noguera and other disgraced directors of the agency. "I put my hands into fire for him," Mr. Uribe famously said in 2006 of Mr. Noguera. Mr. Uribe appointed Mr. Noguera to be Colombia's consul general in Milan, after he resigned from the intelligence agency in 2005.

Mr. Uribe, in a [Twitter message](#) Wednesday, seemed uncharacteristically regretful regarding Mr. Noguera. "I nominated him because of his résumé and his family," he said. "I trusted him; if he transgressed the law, it pains me and I offer apologies to the citizenry."

Four other officials appointed by Mr. Uribe to run the agency resigned amid accusations of illegal surveillance, and Colombia is now seeking the extradition from Panama of one former agency chief, María del Pilar Hurtado, in connection with the surveillance of human rights activists, journalists and judges under her watch.

Still, the case against Mr. Noguera, 47, who was also found guilty of destroying and hiding public documents, was the most serious. Mr. Noguera served as Mr. Uribe's first intelligence chief from 2002 to 2005, a period in which prosecutors said he shared with paramilitary

leaders a list of trade union activists to be made targets for assassination.

The Supreme Court did not find Mr. Noguera guilty of aggravated homicide in the killings of a politician, Fernando Piscioti, and a journalist, Zully Codina, in 2003. But it found him guilty in connection to the killing of Alfredo Correa de Andreis, a well-known sociologist who was shot in Barranquilla in 2004 by paramilitary assassins.

After Mr. Noguera's arrest in 2007, prosecutors investigating his case **unraveled an intricate effort by the intelligence agency to frame Mr. Correa de Andreis**, who had investigated paramilitary activities in parts of Colombia, as a collaborator of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

According to testimony from one of Mr. Noguera's former senior deputies at the agency, Mr. Noguera helped to coordinate the assassination. The assertion was corroborated by documents and other testimony obtained by investigators.

José Humberto Torres, a lawyer for the Correa de Andreis family, said the investigation also found that money from the agency had been used for the murder. "We always said that DAS was responsible," said Mr. Torres, referring to the agency by its acronym in Spanish. "Now, almost seven years to the day after the crime committed on Sept. 17, 2004, Colombian justice has shown we were right from the start."

Jenny Carolina González contributed reporting from Bogotá, Colombia, and María Eugenia Díaz from Caracas, Venezuela.