# Precursors

In 1978, political, financial and social deterioration in the country reached its peak. Crises among departments in the government meant it was no longer feasible for the country’s security to be in its hands.

Citizen morale, maintained before by citizens’ ultimately unsatisfied hope for change and improvement, crumbled in a moment when the dictatorship had become tyrannical, inflexible and radically opposed to legal, peaceful and ordered political change.

That year, any possibility of change, the restitution of civil freedoms, the promotion of a new national order, or reform, was but a dream. Subsequently, the number of exiles who fled the country that year increased drastically, and masses of civil servants walked away from their profession.

## For all intents and purposes, there was no longer a government. There was a complete scarcity of essential resources for citizens, of which PUNT leaders took advantage to institutionalise acts of persecution against owners of private wealth: cases of violence and fraud, rape and of all kinds of corruption and abuse increased.

Prisons across the country filled. Eventual inmates did not receive a trial, and they had not been convicted of their crimes. They were moved to farms, where they worked as free labour and were practically held under a regime of slavery.

The members of the cabinet were living in different areas of the country, which made collaboration among them difficult and led to selfishness among politicians in public affairs.

Macías alone was absolute head, for one and all, for civil servants and self-employed, for civilians and soldiers. Macías was feared by all, but there were no established, written procedures, which plagued administrative decisions in all public sectors (the military, health, law and the police); everyone interpreted Macías’ selfish doctrines in their own way - both the PUNT, and the authorities and individuals who could be trusted.

## The only figure with whom those authorities showed solidarity was Mathias; rivalry, misunderstanding and power disputes dominated among them.

This aided the stability of Macías’ regime, who subsequently managed to extinguish the possibility of any groups forming in opposition to him.

State leadership seemed to gradually transform into a traditional, centralised leadership responsible for all the functions of both state and government.

Macías turned strange, and concern was eventually raised about his mental capacities owing to his violent, spectacular backlashes. One example of this was his order, given in a fit of rage, for the towns of Melén-Yenvam, in the district of Mongomo, and of Jandje, in the district of Mbini, to be set on fire. His actions fluctuated often, which made it difficult to define the type of governor he was or wanted to be. His image as an astute, brave, nationalist, energetic politician contrasted with his mistrust, fear, resentment, selfishness and exaggerated, obsessive tendencies, made apparent through a strong feeling of personal insecurity and the persecution he took against political opponents, who were almost always figments of his imagination.