



THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Bringing Human Rights Abusers To Justice.

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Lisa Cohen: 310-395-2544, lisa@lisacohen.org

**SPANISH JUDGE ISSUES HISTORIC INDICTMENT AND ARREST WARRANTS AGAINST
20 DEFENDANTS IN *JESUITS MASSACRE* CASE**

San Francisco, CA -- Today, a Spanish judge issued a 77-page indictment and arrest warrants for 20 Salvadoran ex-officers who have been charged with crimes against humanity and state terrorism for their role in the murders of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her sixteen year old daughter in 1989. The defendants were all members of the Salvadoran military, including several who were in the High Command. The highest ranking defendant, Rafael Humberto Larios, was the Minister of Defense at the time of the massacre. Also indicted is General Rafael Bustillo, Colonel Orlando Zepeda who was also Vice Minister of Defense and Colonel Inocente Orlando Montano who was Vice Minister of Public Safety.

In the lengthy charging document, Judge Eloy Velasco describes the far reaching conspiracy to kill the Jesuit priests and explains how it was conceived as a military operation at the highest levels of the Salvadoran Army and Military Intelligence. The defendants, the majority of whom are still residents of El Salvador, have ten days to surrender to authorities before additional steps will be taken to ensure their arrest. Colonel Orlando Montano is already in custody.

This indictment come almost three years since, the Center for Justice & Accountability (CJA) and the Spanish Pro Human Rights Association (APDHE) initiated a case before the Spanish National Court for the murders against members of the Salvadoran military. CJA has been working closely with Spanish and US authorities to ensure the arrest of the defendants and to expand the case to include six more defendants who were responsible for the massacre. CJA has presented extensive testimony to the court over the past few years including expert testimony from Stanford Professor Terry Karl, military expert Colonel Garcia and Salvadoran Judge Sydney Blanco, among others.

On the morning of November 16, 1989, in the midst of a bloody civil war, El Salvador and the world woke up to the news that six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and the housekeeper's daughter had been brutally murdered. A Truth Commission report revealed that the Salvadoran military planned and committed the crimes against the priests, who were outspoken critics of the military dictatorship. For the past 21 years, all efforts to obtain justice in El Salvador have been thwarted. In explaining the basis for the issuance of the indictment and the arrest warrants, the judge explains that any claim of double jeopardy should fail because the 1990 trial held in El Salvador was a "sham trial."

CJA and APDHE originally filed the criminal case before the Spanish National Court on November 13, 2008. The complaint was originally filed against 14 former members of the Salvadoran High Command and the Atlacatl battalion for their role in the Jesuits Massacre. Among the victims: Fathers Ignacio Ellacuría, Ignacio Martín-Baró, Segundo Montes, Amando López, and Juan Ramon Moreno, who were born and ordained in Spain; and father Joaquin López y López, Elba Ramos, and her 15-year-old daughter Celina Meredith were Salvadoran.

CJA International Attorney Almudena Bernabeu and lead counsel on the case said, "This indictment represents justice for all Salvadorans, not only for the Jesuits but for all the anonymous victims, for whom the Jesuits worked tirelessly. It is a true honor for CJA and APDHE to have made this contribution to their legacy. Our work on this will continue."

For more information on the criminal case against those responsible for the Jesuits Massacre, as well as CJA's other El Salvador cases filed in the U.S, see www.cja.org.

About CJA

CJA is a San Francisco-based human rights organization dedicated to ending torture and other severe human rights abuses around the world and advancing the rights of survivors to seek truth, justice and redress. CJA pursues litigation in the U.S. and Spain to hold perpetrators individually accountable for human rights abuses, develop human rights law, and advance the rule of law in countries transitioning from abuses.

About APDHE

APDHE, founded clandestinely in 1976 soon after the death of Dictator Francisco Franco, is the oldest human rights association in Spain. APDHE advocates among government agencies and civil society for the protection of human rights. APDHE has a long tradition of working for the promotion of human rights in Latin America.

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