



For Immediate Release
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The Executive Office of Immigration Review of the DOJ Releases Immigration Judge's Ruling Finding Former Salvadoran General and Minister of Defense José Guillermo García Removable from the United States

San Francisco, CA – This week, in response to a lawsuit filed by *The New York Times* and Julia Preston, the Executive Office of Immigration Review of the Department of Justice released an immigration judge ruling, which ordered that former Salvadoran Defense Minister José Guillermo García is subject to removal from the United States due to his assistance and participation in the torture of Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) client Dr. Juan Romagoza, among many other civilians. The ruling also cites Garcia's assistance and participation in the 1980 extrajudicial killing of the four American churchwomen, the 1981 Sheraton Hotel killings of two Americans and a Salvadoran land reform leader, the 1981 massacre at El Mozote, the 1980 massacre at the Sumpul River, the assassination of the leaders of FDR, the political opposition, among many other killings and massacres. The Immigration Judge characterized Garcia's actions as "deliberate military policy."

After a previous FOIA lawsuit in which the *New York Times* and Preston succeeded in obtaining the release of a similar order for former General and Minister of Defense Vides-Casanova, the EOIR released the Garcia decision without the necessity of filing a federal court case. In the removal hearing, Dr. Romagoza gave moving testimony regarding the horrendous torture he suffered at the hands of Salvadoran security forces while José Guillermo García was the Minister of Defense. In referring to the torture of Romagoza and other innocent Salvadorans, the Immigration Judge found it "inconceivable" that torture on such a widespread scale occurred without the knowledge of the Minister of Defense. Further, the Immigration Judge found that Garcia "fostered and allowed to thrive, an institutional atmosphere in which the Salvadoran Armed Forces preyed upon defenseless civilians..." Garcia's term in office was characterized by the most vicious and widespread state repression against the civilian population of the decades-long Salvadoran conflict. In 2002, CJA won a civil suit against Generals García and Vides Casanova and has vigorously engaged in efforts to have them removed ever since.

"We are thankful for the persistence of the *New York Times* for ensuring transparency in the cases of the two top commanders of the Salvadoran military during the 1980s," said Carolyn Patty Blum Senior Legal Advisor for the Center for Justice and Accountability. "Our clients courageously have testified about the brutality they suffered so that the Immigration Judge would have a real sense of the impact of the crimes in which Garcia assisted and participated. CJA has worked since our inception to obtain justice for the brutality of the Salvadoran military and security forces under Garcia's leadership. We are pleased that the veil has been lifted further to shed light on the crimes committed by José Guillermo García and the troops he directed. We commend the DHS for their vigorous prosecution of the Garcia removal case."

To view the ruling and to learn more about the case and other cases against Salvadoran defendants 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 to hold perpetrators individually accountable for human rights abuses, develop human rights law, and advance the rule of law in countries transitioning from abuses.

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