



For Immediate Release
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Center for Justice and Accountability Leads Human Rights Delegation to El Salvador to Commemorate 25th Anniversary of Jesuits Massacre, Calls on New Government to Cooperate With Spanish National Court's Investigation of the Massacre

CJA and Human Rights Leaders Return From El Salvador Following Meetings with Government Leaders to Address Accountability for Perpetrators, Justice for Victims

San Francisco, CA – The Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) organized a delegation that traveled to El Salvador to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Jesuits Massacre. In a very successful journey, CJA's delegation members met with Salvadoran Vice President Oscar Ortiz, justices from the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court, activists, journalists, educators, and other senior government officials. During these meetings, delegates discussed the most pressing issues facing El Salvador, including human rights, immigration, CJA's *Jesuits Massacre Case* – which was filed in 2008 before the Spanish National Court – and the currently pending U.S. extradition of one of the defendants in the case, Colonel Inocente Orlando Montano. If the United States agrees to extradite Montano to Spain and the government of El Salvador does not interfere, upon the opening of the trial in Spain, it will be the first time that justice can be attained for the 1989 killing of six Jesuit priests, a housekeeper, and her 16-year-old daughter.

Salvadoran government officials clearly stated that they would not object to the extradition of Montano from the U.S. to Spain to face trial. With both El Salvador and Spain signaling their support for the case to be heard, CJA is hopeful that the United States will follow suit and extradite Montano to Spain so that he may be tried.

Salvadoran government officials were also receptive to the delegation's encouragement of the government to deal with the amnesty law passed in 1993, which protects all military and guerilla forces from prosecutions for human rights abuses committed during El Salvador's civil war. If the amnesty law is repealed, this would open opportunities for justice for the victims, meaningful reparations, and transition.

"CJA's delegation traveled to El Salvador at a crucial time for the country," said Almudena Bernabeu, CJA International Attorney. "After the last elections, with a new and true FMLN government, we had the opportunity to address important human rights issues. We were clear and they heard our demands. The administration of Salvador Sanchez Ceren has the obligation and opportunity to make a difference, to improve the lives of the people of El Salvador – the people they fought for – and ensure that they see justice. Montano's extradition and repealing the amnesty law are the key first steps."

At the University of Central America (UCA), several delegates participated in a vigil and discussed how the tragic 1989 massacre continues to impact El Salvador today. "Hundreds of Salvadorans – not just UCA students but *campesinos* from the villages and countryside, families with their children – gathered to march in the candlelight procession," said Lokelani Devone, a delegation participant and CJA board member. "It is clear that this horrible event - which happened 25 years ago – remains vividly in the

forefront of this country's consciousness and it will likely remain so until the truth of these events is brought into the light."

The delegation of about 20 people included Camilo Artiga-Purcell, Principal at Cotchett, Pitre, & McCarthy; Daniel Barton, Managing Partner of Nolan, Armstrong & Barton, LLP; Nancy Clark, San Francisco educator; Lokelani Devone, Attorney and CJA Board Member; Neris González, torture survivor and plaintiff in CJA's landmark case *Romagoza Arce v. Garcia*, James K. Green, Attorney; Carlos Mauricio, activist and plaintiff in *Romagoza Arce v. Garcia*; Jay McNally, Former CEO of Ibis Consulting and current trustee for College of the Atlantic and advisory board member of International Partners in Mission; Joey Neugart, General Counsel of Singularity University and CJA Board Member; Dr. Juan Romagoza Arce, co-founder of Central American Refugee Committee and plaintiff in *Romagoza v. Garcia*; Peter Sanders, Director of Major Gifts and Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at the University of Vermont; Peter Stern, Policy Manager at Facebook; Nico W. van Aelstyn, Principal with Beveridge & Diamond, P.C.; Rev. Dr. William Wipfler, former Director of the National Council of Churches' Latin American Department; and Almudena Bernabeu, CJA International Attorney and Transitional Justice Program Director.

About the Center for Justice and Accountability

CJA is a San Francisco-based human rights organization dedicated to deterring torture and other severe human rights abuses around the world and advancing the rights of survivors to seek truth, justice and redress. CJA uses litigation to hold perpetrators individually accountable for human rights abuses, develop human rights law, and advance the rule of law in countries transitioning from periods of abuse. www.cja.org

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