



## Ex-Salvadoran military colonel's sentencing begins

By Bridget Murphy (Associated Press) Thursday, August 22, 2013

BOSTON — A federal judge weighing punishment for a former El Salvador military leader on immigration charges heard testimony Thursday about allegations the defendant committed war crimes before coming to the United States.

Inocente Orlando Montano, El Salvador's former vice minister of public security, is hoping for a probation sentence after pleading guilty to lying on U.S. immigration forms.

Federal authorities arrested the 70-year-old in 2011 after he spent about a decade living in a Boston suburb and earning \$14 an hour in a candy factory. They're asking for a sentence of more than four years in prison.

During testimony, Stanford University professor Terry Lynn Karl, a government witness with expertise in Latin American politics, defended her report that said Montano was part of a conspiracy with other high-ranking military officials to plot what turned into an incident known as the Jesuit Massacre.

In 1993, a United Nations commission named Montano as a participant in a meeting to plot the slaying of a priest suspected of supporting leftist rebels, which allegedly led to the deaths of six priests, their cook and her teenage daughter at a Jesuit university.

Montano is among 20 people that authorities in Spain indicted in 2011 in connection with the 1989 slayings during El Salvador's civil war. He has denied involvement, but prosecutors in the immigration case have alleged Montano emigrated in part to avoid possible prosecution for the massacre.

The defense has said that an amnesty law in El Salvador protected Montano from prosecution there, and he emigrated in 2001 because of financial hardships and problems after earthquakes.

U.S. District Judge Douglas Woodlock said Thursday his main concern wasn't to determine if Montano was involved in human rights violations, but to figure out if the defendant was concerned about potential prosecution for such crimes when he came to the U.S.

During cross-examination, Karl agreed El Salvadoran authorities didn't bring charges against Montano in the time that elapsed between the Jesuit massacre and when he left his country more than a decade later.

But Karl suggested some advocates for the victims "got very close" in their efforts to spark a prosecution in El Salvador.

Defense attorney Oscar Cruz Jr. also elicited testimony showing Karl's report mischaracterized a trip Montano once took to Chile as an opportunity to study intelligence methods, instead of calling it a military mission.

Cruz suggested the error wasn't insignificant because Karl's report cast Montano as an admirer of former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, and cited an order for the Chilean official to stand trial on human rights crimes as a reason Montano might have been motivated to leave El Salvador.

Walking with a cane, Montano declined comment upon leaving the courtroom Thursday.

His sentencing on three counts of immigration fraud and three counts of perjury is scheduled to continue Monday, when retired El Salvadoran military general Mauricio Ernesto Vargas is expected to testify as a defense witness.

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