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CRIMINAL TRIAL STARTS IN PERU FOR THE ACCOMARCA MASSACRE

Following the Civil Suits Brought by the Center for Justice and Accountability in the United States, Survivors of the Massacre Will Finally Have the Opportunity to Obtain Justice in Peru After 25 Years

Lima, Peru -- Today, more than 25 years after the horrific Accomarca massacre that resulted in the killing of approximately 69 civilians, mostly women and children, a criminal trial begins in Peru against 26 former Peruvian Army officers, including Telmo Hurtado and Juan Rivera Rondón, two of the commanders of the patrols responsible for the crime. A key factor in getting a trial in Peru is the fact that in 2007, the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) filed civil suits in the United States against these two defendants, who were living in the United States at the time. The suits, which accused the defendants of torture, extrajudicial killings, war crimes and crimes against humanity, became the legal basis for Rivera Rondón's deportation to Peru on August 15, 2008 and Hurtado's imminent extradition.

In a combined litigation strategy with the Peruvian Pro Human Rights Organization (APRODEH), CJA filed the suits with a goal of exposing the defendants as human rights abusers and sending them back to Peru to face criminal prosecution. In CJA's lawsuit against Hurtado, a U.S. judge ruled that he was responsible for the massacre and ordered him to pay \$37 million in damages to the plaintiffs and the estates of their family members. The second case against River Rondón has been stayed to provide survivors with the opportunity to pursue justice in their home country.

"Thanks to the hope and persistence of the survivors of this terrible massacre, the day has finally come to obtain justice," said Almudena Bernabeu, CJA's international attorney who spearheaded the U.S. cases. "The survivors have waited 25 long years for this day. All they seek is justice for the crimes that were committed against their fellow citizens and family members and they are finally getting their day in Peru's court."

Hurtado and Rivera Rondón are among 24 other defendants being tried for their role in the 1985 massacre that took place in the midst of a bloody civil war in Peru. Despite efforts of the survivors, justice in Peru has never been achieved and no one has been held responsible for the killings. This is the first prosecution in Peru for the abuses committed by the Armed Forces against civilians during the 1980's after president Alan Garcia took power in July 1985.

CJA along with Peruvian Non-Governmental Organization partners, the Institute of Legal Defense (IDL) and APRODEH, have put together an international legal team to provide

survivors with legal representation and international support. CJA's clients, Teófila Ochoa and Cirila Pulido, were 12 years old at the time and survived the killings by hiding from the soldiers. Despite her own escape, Teófila Ochoa's mother, four brothers and a sister were killed. Soldiers murdered Cirila Pulido's mother and brother. The plaintiffs are both members of the Association of Relatives of the Victims of Political Violence in Accomarca (AFAVPDA) which was formed by the survivors of the massacre.

In 2002, Hurtado and Rivera Rondón fled Peru to the United States after Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission report was released that exposed their role in the massacre. According to the report, 26,259 civilians died or disappeared in the area surrounding Accomarca during Peru's civil war.

The claims in the U.S. cases against Hurtado and Rivera Rondón were brought under two U.S. federal statutes, the Alien Tort Statute and the Torture Victim Protection Act, which permit victims of severe human rights abuses to seek redress in U.S. courts. CJA supports transitional justice efforts in Peru and in other countries through partnerships with local Non-Governmental Organizations and through working with in-country prosecutors.

For more information on the lawsuits against Hurtado and Rivera Rondón, see www.cja.org.

About the Center for Justice and Accountability

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 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.