

## PRESS RELEASE

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### HOUSE OF LORDS RULING: NO IMMUNITY FOR PINOCHET

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The Center for Justice and Accountability welcomes the decision today from Britain's House of Lords denying General Augusto Pinochet immunity from prosecution for crimes against humanity and torture. "This historical decision proves that heads of state who have committed, ordered or tolerated human rights violations will be held accountable, sending a strong message to the Pinochets and Milosevics of the world," said Shawn Roberts, Legal Director of The Center for Justice and Accountability. The arrest and subsequent denial of immunity for General Pinochet signals the beginning of the end of impunity for human rights violators.

We hope that this decision serves as an impetus for the U.S. government to prosecute human rights violators now living in the United States. According to Gerald Gray, the Executive Director of The Center for Justice and Accountability, "there are thousands of human rights violators who have entered the U.S. since the end of the Vietnam War." We further encourage the U.S. government to assist the Spanish proceedings in any way possible including the release all classified documents related to human rights violations committed during the Pinochet regime.

Earlier this week, The Center for Justice and Accountability announced the filing of a civil lawsuit against Armando Fernandez-Larios, a U.S. resident and former high ranking member of Pinochet's secret police (the DINA). The lawsuit is the first such action taken against a

Chilean official in the U.S. since Pinochet's October 1998 arrest in London. Fernandez-Larios stands accused of the 1973 torture and summary execution of Winston Cabello, an official in the Allende administration. Fernandez-Larios was a member of a squad of Chilean soldiers, armed with a signed order from Pinochet, responsible for executing 72 political prisoners in 1973 as a part of the campaign of terror now referred to as the "Caravan of Death."

"For twenty five years my family has waited for justice to prevail. The lawsuits against General Pinochet and Armando Fernandez-Larios are an opportunity not only for my family but also for the international community itself to seek justice," said Zita Cabello-Barrueto, plaintiff and sister of Winston Cabello.

Fernandez-Larios first made headlines in 1987 when he provided information to U.S. officials regarding the role of General Pinochet in the 1976 DINA sponsored car-bombing in Washington D.C. which killed the ex-Chilean Ambassador to the U.S., Orlando Letelier, and his U.S. assistant, Ronni Karpen Moffitt. He struck a plea bargain with the U.S. Government prosecutors and, after fulfilling the terms of the plea agreement, is believed to have entered the U.S. Federal Witness Protection Program.

Although the Pinochet decision is definitive in its finding of a lack of immunity for human rights violations committed by a head of state, The Center for Justice and Accountability regrets its limited scope in allowing only violations committed after 1988 to be prosecuted. This limitation is based on procedural aspects of England's extradition law.

The Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA), based in San Francisco, was established in 1998 with the support of Amnesty International USA and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture to pursue human rights violators found in the United States. CJA is committed to ensuring that the U.S. is a genuine safe haven for survivors of human rights abuses by providing redress through: civil lawsuits under the federal statutes, the Alien Tort Claims Act and Torture Victim Protection Act; work with U.S. government agencies to encourage adherence to international human rights norms; and public education about the presence of human rights perpetrators in the United States.