



**For Immediate Release  
December 2, 2009**

**CONTACT:**

U.S.: Lindsay Robinson, CJA Development & Outreach Associate, 415-544-0444 x303, lrobinson@cja.org

Spain: Almudena Bernabeu, CJA International Attorney and Transitional Justice Program Director, cell in Spain 011-34-648-861-629, cell in the US: 415-305-2097  
abernabeu@cja.org

Spain: Manuel Ollé Sesé, APDHE President, 91 402 23 12, apdhe@telefonica.net

**SPANISH JUDGE HEARS TESTIMONY FROM EXPERT WITNESSES IN THE  
GUATEMALA GENOCIDE CASE**

**FORENSIC EVIDENCE OF MASS MURDER, ARMY DOCUMENTS, AND FILMED  
INTERVIEWS WITH ALLEGED PERPETRATORS WILL BE INTRODUCED**

*Madrid, Spain, December 2, 2009* – On December 1, 2009, Judge Santiago Pedraz heard extraordinary testimony from Fredy Peccerelli, Director of the Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala (FAFG), on hundreds of exhumations conducted across Guatemala to unearth the remains of civilian victims killed in Guatemala during in the 1980s. Peccerelli, who was brought into the case as an expert witness by the Center for Justice & Accountability (CJA) and the Spanish Association for Human Rights (APDHE), presented the Judge with a 900-page report analyzing 363 exhumations conducted by FAFG of victims killed between 1978 and 1984 in five municipalities in Guatemala. Among the conclusions of the report, FAFG found that of the 1,884 victims exhumed, more than 25 percent were infants or children; 78 percent exhibited gunshot wounds to the head; and 65 percent of victims were killed in 1982 alone.

Peccerelli's testimony supported the accounts of dozens of witnesses and survivors who have previously testified. Almudena Bernabeu, CJA's International Attorney and lead counsel in the genocide case states: "This week's testimony will serve to corroborate evidence already brought before this Court. Having in the case the objective and tangible information provided by original military documents and the anthropological data takes the case to the next level."

Also testifying was the National Security Archive's Kate Doyle, who has obtained hundreds of pages of original Guatemalan Army records on "Operation Sofía," an alleged "scorched earth operation" which targeted Mayan communities in the Quiché region during July and August, 1982. Although survivors of Operation Sofía have already described the effects of the Army's attack in testimony before Judge Pedraz – including the killing of unarmed men, women and children, the burning of houses, destruction of crops, slaughter of animals, and indiscriminate bombing of civilians fleeing the violence – this will be the first time original Guatemalan military records about a specific

operation have ever been made available to prosecutors in a human rights case. Doyle explained the evidence contained in the documents from Operation Sofia on the role of the Army High Command in ordering, planning and overseeing the operation.

Finally, Pamela Yates, documentary film director and co-founder of Skylight Pictures, provided testimony about her experience filming in Guatemala during the height of repression in the first half of 1982. She provided eye witness testimony of military combat missions into the Mayan regions of the country, interviews with Gen. Benedicto Lucas García and Ríos Montt, and footage of a massacre site in Chajul, Quiché in May 1982. As supporting documentation, Yates brought her 1983 documentary film, *When the Mountains Tremble*, as well as seven hours of footage not included in the film and transcripts from the interviews she conducted with the defendants and other military officers.

The Guatemala Genocide Case began in 1999 when Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum and other victims filed a criminal complaint in Spain against senior Guatemalan government officials charging them with terrorism, genocide and systematic torture. CJA has led the work on the case since 2006 as a private prosecutor for Mayan survivors of the genocide with the support of APDHE. The case is modeled on the Pinochet case which was also brought in Spain. Naomi Roht-Arriaza, Professor at Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, and Susie Kemp of the Netherlands are also part of the international legal team.

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 in the U.S. and Spain 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.

APDHE, founded clandestinely in 1976 soon after the death of dictator Francisco Franco, is the oldest human rights association in Spain. APDHE advocates among government agencies and civil society for the protection of human rights. APDHE has a long tradition of working for the promotion of human rights in Latin America.

For more information please visit [www.cja.org](http://www.cja.org).

###

CJA 870 Market Street Suite 682, San Francisco, CA 94102 tel 415 544 0444 fax 415 544 0456 info@cja.org; cja.org  
APDHE Calle José Ortega y Gasset, 77, 2º A 28006 Madrid, España t: 91 402 32 04; f: 91 402 84 99 apdhe@telefonica.ne