



# Peruvian Massacre Survivor Testifies

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MIAMI —

A woman who survived a massacre by Peruvian army units almost 20 years ago testified Monday against two former military officers, saying she watched soldiers rape and torture women and children.

Teofila Ochoa was 12 at the time of the 1985 killings of 69 people, including her mother and five younger siblings.

"My head would hurt, my heart would hurt and I would wish I was dead," Ochoa said in Spanish. "I had no one, because I lost who I had loved the most."

On trial are Telmo Ricardo Hurtado and Juan Rivera Rondon, who led Peruvian army units during what became known as the Accomarca Massacre. It happened during a civil war in Peru between the government and the Shining Path guerrilla group.

Rondon's unit blocked an escape route in a village in the Andean highlands while Hurtado's men searched houses, according to court documents. Ultimately, dozens of people were forced into two buildings and Hurtado's soldiers opened fire, the lawsuit alleges.

The suit was filed under the U.S. Alien Tort Statute and Torture Victim Protection Act, which allows non-U.S. citizens to bring to courts cases of international law violations if the accused lives or has assets in the United States.

Hurtado came to the U.S. in 2002 and recently served a six-month sentence in a Miami federal prison for lying to U.S. officials to obtain a visa. He remains in federal custody pending deportation proceedings. Rondon had lived in Montgomery County, Md., since the early 1990s, and is being held in that state on immigration charges.

Hurtado made a brief appearance during the hearing but was allowed to leave after he told U.S. District Judge Adalberto Jordan he did not have legal representation or want to participate.

The Center For Justice and Accountability, a human rights group, sued in federal courts in Miami and Greenbelt, Md., on behalf of Ochoa and Cirila Pulido, who was also 12 when soldiers killed her mother and brother.

They accuse the men of war crimes, torture, crimes against humanity and illegal killings and are seeking an unspecified amount of damages.

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On the Net:

Center for Justice & Accountability: <http://www.cja.org>

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