



For Immediate Release

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**FIRST INTERNATIONAL WITNESSES TO TESTIFY IN MADRID IN THE
EL SALVADOR JESUITS MASSACRE CASE**

Madrid, Spain, November 23, 2009 - Twenty years after the massacre of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter and after many unsuccessful efforts to seek justice, tomorrow, lawyers from the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) and the Pro Human Rights Association of Spain (APDHE), acting as popular prosecutors, will present testimony before the Spanish National Court of the first round of witnesses in the Jesuits Massacre Case.

Judge Eloy Velasco will hear the testimony of Political Science and Latin-American expert at the University of Stanford, California, Professor Terry Karl. Karl will testify as an expert witness on her analysis of thousands of declassified U.S. documents, including many newly declassified documents. Kate Doyle, Senior Analyst at the National Security Archive in Washington D.C., will also testify as an expert. Doyle's testimony will address the concept, origin, and scope of the Jesuits' collection of U.S. declassified documents. Two more witnesses from El Salvador, whose identity remains reserved for security reasons, will also testify.

In another development, on November 17, the President of the Salvadoran Supreme Court, José Belarmino Jaime, reported that, in response to Judge's Velasco request, he will send to the Spanish National Court the current addresses of the defendants. The request was made so the defendants could be adequately served with the complaint.

CJA and APDHE filed this criminal case before the Spanish National Court on November 13, 2008. This is the first universal jurisdiction case filed in Spain that received, from the Spanish prosecutor's office, a unanimous opinion in support of the admission of the complaint. The complaint was filed against 14 former members of the Salvadoran High Command and the Atlacatl battalion for their role in the Jesuits Massacre. Among the victims, the following Jesuit priests were born and ordained in Spain: Ignacio Ellacuría, Ignacio Martín-Baró, Segundo Montes, Amando López, and Juan Ramon Moreno. Father Joaquin López y López, Elba Ramos, and her 15-year-old daughter Celina were Salvadoran.

For the past 20 years, all efforts to obtain justice in El Salvador have been thwarted. In 1993, the government of El Salvador passed an amnesty law which exempts from investigation and prosecution of all political crimes associated with the civil war period, thus perpetuating a "culture of impunity." This new attempt to obtain justice in Spain and the 20th anniversary made

possible last week a public recognition of the martyrs and their contribution to El Salvador. FMLN President, Mauricio Funes invested them with the "Jose Matias Delgado" order, El Salvador's highest recognition.

On November 6, the Salvadoran government acknowledged for the first time to the Inter American Commission for Human Rights, the Salvadoran state's responsibility for the assassination in 1980, of Archbishop Oscar Romero. CJA brought a successful civil suit in Fresno, California against Captain Alvaro Rafael Saravia, one of the architects of the assassination.

CJA International Attorney Almudena Bernabeu states: "This first round of testimony in Spain seeks justice on behalf of the victim's relatives and for the people of El Salvador. Guaranteeing justice and respect for the dignity of all the victims of the past is the only way that El Salvador can make the transition towards reconciliation and a stronger society."

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 abuses.

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. APDHE president, Manuel Olle Sese, is a human rights lawyer and expert in universal jurisdiction.

For more information on the criminal case against those responsible for the Jesuits Massacre, as well as CJA's other El Salvador cases filed in the U.S. please visit cja.org