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Colombian Warlord Sued in U.S. Federal Court

MIAMI – A U.S. human rights organization is suing former Colombian militia leader Carlos Mario Jimenez for torture, extrajudicial killing, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The California-based Center for Justice and Accountability said it filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida on behalf of surviving family members of Eduardo Estrada Gutierrez and Alma Rosa Jaramillo Lafourie, who were killed by paramilitaries under the command of Jimenez, alias “Macaco.”

Jimenez led the 7,000-strong Bloque Central Bolivar, or BCB, a unit of the AUC federation of right-wing militias.



He was among a number of top AUC leaders who surrendered to Colombian authorities as part of a negotiated demobilization of the militias and were subsequently extradited to the United States on drug-trafficking charges.

The AUC, like Colombia’s leftist rebels, became involved in the illegal drug trade as a way of funding its operations.

The paramilitary leaders turned themselves in under the provisions of Colombia’s Justice and Peace Law, which promised them greatly reduced sentences if they made full confessions and paid reparations to victims.

Though Jimenez and other AUC chieftains acknowledged their responsibility for massacres and other war crimes in Colombia, Bogota handed them over to Washington for trial on the less-serious offenses.

Macaco is currently locked up at a federal prison in Miami.

The CJA says Macaco’s men carried out the 2001 killings of two leaders of the Program for Peace and Development in the Middle Magdalena region: Alma Rosa Jaramillo and Eduardo Estrada.

“Between 1997 and 2007, more than 20 leaders of this organization (the PDP) were tortured, disappeared or murdered” by BCB militiamen, the CJA said.

The suit is the first brought against an AUC member under the U.S. Alien Tort Statute and the

Torture Victim Protection Act.

“The extradition of the AUC leaders emptied the Justice and Peace process and left thousands of Colombian victims without the little they have obtained after years of struggle: some truth and justice,” CJA Executive Director Pamela Merchant said in a statement.

“After more than two years of working with the victims and our Colombian partners, we all at CJA are profoundly honored to assist Colombian victims in their tireless search for justice, this time in U.S. courts,” she said.

Law firm Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati is acting as CJA’s pro-bono co-counsel. EFE

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