



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Lisa Cohen, 310-395-2544
lisa@lisacohen.org

Retired Salvadoran Commander Inocente Orlando Montano Pleads Guilty to Federal Criminal Immigration Fraud and Perjury Charges

Former Colonel is One of Six Commanders Responsible for the 1989 Jesuits Massacre in El Salvador

Boston, September 11, 2012. Retired Salvadoran colonel Inocente Orlando Montano pled guilty today to six counts of federal criminal immigration fraud and perjury before district judge Douglas P. Woodlock. The guilty plea acknowledges that he knowingly made false statements on his application for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a humanitarian immigration benefit for Salvadorans unable to return safely to their home country. He could face a cumulative maximum sentence of 45 years in federal prison, 18 years of post-incarceration supervision and 1.5 million dollars in fines. Judge Woodlock will determine the sentence after receiving further evidence at a sentencing hearing scheduled for December 18 at 2:30 p.m. He ordered the preparation of a probation department sentencing memorandum, and Assistant U.S. Attorney John Capin indicated he intended to call a witness at the sentencing hearing.

Montano is one of the commanders indicted by the Spanish National Court for the 1989 massacre in El Salvador of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter. The indictments in Spain were the result of the case filed by the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) and its Spanish partner, the Spanish Association Pro Human Rights (APDHE) on November 13, 2008. After two and half years of intensive investigation, Judge Eloy Velasco issued an over 75 page indictment detailing the background to and the planning, ordering, and carrying out of the crime. Col. Montano, as Vice Minister of Defense for Public Security at the time of the killings, was one of 4 top commanders of the Salvadoran military. Judge Velasco has issued an extradition request for Montano, and it has been received by the U.S. government and is pending action. Montano's plea agreement includes his assent to removal from the United States, and Judge Woodlock reminded Montano that the plea agreement also anticipates the possibility of extradition.

In the United States, Col. Montano, on multiple occasions, failed to answer questions truthfully on the TPS immigration form regarding his date of entry into the United States as well as his weapons and military training in El Salvador in order to qualify for the Salvadoran TPS program. The pled-to charges were those stemming from the fraud regarding his date of entry. Perjury charges resulted from the fact that he knew his answers, signed under oath, were false. While Col. Montano reluctantly admitted to his career in the Salvadoran military during today's plea hearing, he acknowledged to the judge that he understood the maximum penalties to which he was now susceptible. Montano came to the US soon after the Society of Jesuits filed a criminal

case in El Salvador against him and other members of the High Command for the massacre of the priests.

In reacting to the indictment, CJA Senior Legal Advisor Carolyn Patty Blum commented, “We are gratified that the Boston U.S. Attorney’s Office so Vigorously has pursued federal criminal charges against Col. Montano and has negotiated a successful guilty plea on multiple counts. The fact that Col. Montano now faces a major stint in a U.S. prison is one part of the search for accountability for his participation in the conspiracy to kill the Jesuits that CJA has been pursuing since 2008. We look forward to Montano’s sentencing hearing and the initiation of extradition proceedings against him.”

CJA is a San Francisco-based human rights organization dedicated to deterring torture and other severe human rights abuses around the world and advancing the rights of survivors to seek truth, justice and redress. CJA uses litigation 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.