

US Requests Extradition of Salvadoran Colonel for Jesuit Deaths

telesur. 4.8.2015



The crime occurred 25 years ago during the Salvadoran civil war.

The U.S. government asked a North Carolina court Wednesday to approve the extradition of a Salvadoran former colonel and minister to Spain for the murders of six Jesuit priests, five of whom were Spaniards, in 1989.

Inocente Montano, 72, was fulfilling a 21-month prison sentence in North Carolina for lying over his migration status, so he could remain in the United States and avoid a trial in his country.

The U.S. Department of Justice then linked Montano with Spain's 2011 request of extraditing 20 military officers responsible for the murders of Jesuit priests during the Salvadorian civil war (1980-1992).

Montano allegedly killed six Jesuits — five from Spain — and two Salvadoran women (a cook and her daughter) Nov. 16, 1989, at the University of Central America.

“The day before the assassinations, Montano participated in various meetings and, in the last one, one of the officials, in the presence of Montano, ordered to kill Father Ignacio Ellacuría without leaving witnesses,” stated the U.S. request to the North Carolina court.

As the vice minister of National Defense at the time, Montano was in charge of the state-owned radio, which “broadcasted threats to the priest and his fellows a few days before the crime,” added the statement.

“This is a huge step toward justice and individual criminal accountability,” lawyer Almudena Bernabeu, who represents the priests in the case via the Center of Justice and Accountability, said to EFE.

The San Francisco-based center filed a lawsuit in 2008 before the Spanish court, along with the Association Pro Human Rights of Spain.

If the North Carolina court accepts the extradition, Montano will face up to 30 years in prison over the charges of assassinations, terrorism and crime against humanity.

<http://www.telesurty.net/english/news/US-Requests-Extradition-of-Salvadoran-Colonel-for-Jesuit-Deaths-20150408-0040.html>