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First paramilitary leader sued in US courts

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Extradited Colombian Carlos Mario Jimenez, alias "Macaco," a leader of paramilitary block of the AUC, is the first paramilitary to be sued in U.S. courts for alleged human rights violations. The charges include torture, murder, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, according to the lawyer in charge of the case, Almudena Bernabeu, from the Center for Justice and Accountability.

According to Bernabeu, Jimenez, who is currently serving time in a U.S. federal prison for drug charges, will be taken to court based on a 200-year-old U.S. law that acknowledges the rights of victims of human rights abuses regardless of their nationality, and allows them to use the country's courts to settle complaints.

Jimenez, who was extradited to the U.S. to face drug charges in 2008, is accused of ordering the 2001 kidnapping, torture, and murder of Alma Rosa Jaramillo, and the 2001 murder of Eduardo Estrada, two leaders from the Colombian NGO The Mid-Magdalena Peace and Development Program.

This is the first time, Bernabeu notes, that a complaint has been filed against an extradited Colombian paramilitary for human rights abuses.

According to Bernabeu, the complaint against Jimenez was filed one week ago on "behalf of the victims' surviving family members," and allots the former AUC commander about 30 days to

respond to the charges. However, the process has been "quite tricky," Bernabeu explained, because Jimenez is in the custody of the U.S. federal prison system.

However, the lawyer says, they have "already gotten a judge from the district court" to hear the case, known as "Cabrera v. Jimenez Naranjo."

As Bernabeu explains, following the 2008 extradition to the U.S. of many top AUC figures, victims of paramilitary violence effectively lost their chance to receive reparations or learn the truth about the crimes they suffered. The minor drug sentences that the former AUC leaders were serving in the U.S. were a mere slap on the wrist compared to the seriousness of the human rights violations committed on by these men on Colombian soil in the 1980s and 1990s.

The case against Jimenez is just the first of many to be filed as Colombians "seek remedy for the abuses from the extradited paramilitary" figures. According to Bernabeu, further complaints are being drawn up at the moment against two more paramilitary figures, whose names she did not reveal.

Bernabeu says that the entire process, from filing the complaint to receiving a decision on the trial, could take up to a year.

For more information on the case, [visit the Center for Justice and Accountability's website](#).

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