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Ex President Cristiani knew that there was going to be an assassination attempt on Father Ellacuría.

By Antonio Rubio

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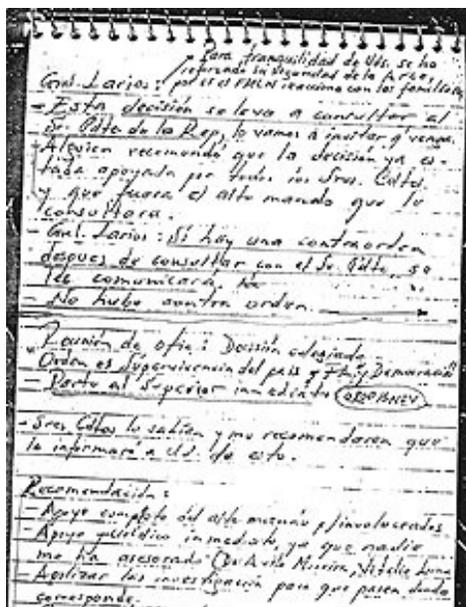
Ignacio Ellacuría (right) and Alfredo Cristiani, when he was president. / REUTERS

- The Spanish National Court has new evidence that points to the ex-president of El Salvador.

More than 20 years have passed since the assassination of father Ignacio Ellacuría, ideologist of liberation theology, and four other Jesuits at the hands of the El Salvador Army and the fence around the intellectual authors of that killing begins to close.

New evidence recently brought to Judge Eloy Velasco of the Spanish National Court by **two revealing witnesses point directly to Alfredo Cristiani**, who in November of 1989 was president and chief commander of the Armed forces in that country.

Those new witnesses, who on the 23rd and 28th of June appeared before the judge of the killing of the Jesuits at the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) in El Salvador, are Benjamín Cuéllar,



director of Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (Idhuca), and José Luis García, Argentine colonel and military expert.

The two revealing and prestigious witnesses pointed out that Alfredo Cristiani, ex-president of El Salvador and chief of the Armed Forces during the killing of the Jesuits (dawn of 16 November 1989), **dedicated himself to covering up the chiefs and officials of the General Staff of El Salvador** that gave the order to eliminate father Ellacuría and the other Jesuits (Ignacio Martín, Segundo Montes, Armando López y Juan Ramón Moreno). In this massacre, Elba Julia Ramos, who worked in the residence at the University, and her daughter Celia, also lost their lives.

Document of a meeting of the General Staff of El Salvador in 1989. (pictured above)

One has to remember that the Jesuits Ellacuría, Martín, Montes, López and Moreno were Spanish and that the proceedings against the leadership of the General Staff of El Salvador was opened in the Spanish National Court after the Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de España (Apdhe) and the North American Center For Justice and Accountability (CJA) in November of 2008 filed a suit against all those intellectually responsible of that killing for ‘crimes against humanity, State terrorism, assassination and torture’. The Salvadoran Justice has halted all open processes against those intellectually responsible for that killing.

Difficult Process

Benjamín Cuéllar pointed out in front of Judge Velasco that ex-President Cristiani gave clear and direct instructions to the Salvadoran Justice to cover up the military that formed part of the General Staff of El Salvador. El MUNDO has obtained a series of documents, hand-written, of a meeting had by the General Staff the 15th of November of 1989 at 20:00 where the actions (orders) that are going to occur are distributed.

In those documents it is reflected how General Larios indicates, among other things, that **“we should take definitive action against the FMLN (the Salvadoran guerrilla)”**. Later on, Larios informs his colleagues of the General Staff that “he has expressed to the Pdte [president]: we close the country to the world for one day, we militarily solve the problem and the next day we once again open the country to the world”.

Another one of the generals, Bustillo, remembers that **they cannot “allow that the humanitarian organizations interfere with our actions”**. Colonel Ponce also gives his opinion in that meeting: “there is authorization to proceed with the elimination of ringleaders, union

leaders and known member leaders of the FMLN...”. Colonel Zepeda, before acting, asks that “God illuminate us with this endeavor”.

Convincing Proof

The most significant and interesting part of that meeting and of the documents that were obtained by this paper is that in those handwritten minutes it is reflected, by way of General Larios, that the president was up to date on all of the actions that took place on the 15th and the 16th of November of 1989. Larios indicates: **“this decision will be consulted with the President of the Country, and we are going to invite him to come”**. General Larios explains to his colleagues of the General Staff of El Salvador that “if there is a counter order after consulting with the President it will be communicated to you”. The same military chief that called for that meeting reflected that “there was no counter order” from the president.

The Argentinean Colonel José Luis García, who is a military expert, has also testified before Judge **Eloy Velasco that he is convinced that President Alfredo Cristiani was up to date on the orders** and the actions that the General Staff of El Salvador were going to take before, during and after the killing of the Jesuits on the 16th of November of 1989.

Because of all of these circumstances and the new evidence brought to the case it is very probably that in the upcoming days Judge Velasco, from the Central 6 of the Spanish National Court, extends the charges and that these can even reach Cristiani.