



THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Bringing Human Rights Abusers To Justice.

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**SPANISH GOVERNMENT SENDS EXTRADITION REQUESTS TO FORMER SENIOR
SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS FOR THEIR ROLE IN
THE 1989 JESUITS MASSACRE**

San Francisco, CA -- Today, the Spanish Council of Ministers has agreed to process the extradition requests issued by Spanish National Court Judge, Eloy Velasco to fifteen former members of the Salvadoran military, including members of the high command. The defendants have all been charged with **conspiracy to assassinate and the assassination of 5 Spanish Jesuits and 3 Salvadoran citizens**. Of these requests, 13 have been sent to El Salvador and 2 to the United States.

This is the next dramatic step in the Jesuits Massacre Case pending in Spain which seeks accountability for the 1989 massacre of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter. The case was filed in 2008 by the Center for Justice & Accountability (CJA) and the Spanish Pro Human Rights Association (APDHE) against members of the Salvadoran military.

In May 2011, after carefully reviewing all the evidence presented by CJA and APDHE lawyers, Judge Velasco issued an indictment which described a far reaching conspiracy to massacre the Jesuit priests and that was formulated at the highest levels of the Salvadoran Army and Military Intelligence.

Spain seeks the extradition of two U.S. residents: Defendant Inocente Orlando Montano, Vice Minister of Public Security and at the time of the massacre colonel of the Salvadoran army and defendant Héctor Ulises Cuenca Ocampo, lieutenant and member of the military intelligence agency (DNI). After CJA filed its case and the indictment was announced, US authorities located Montano in Massachusetts where he is currently in custody facing perjury charges for having lied in his Temporary Protected Status application.

The military officers whose extradition has been requested to El Salvador are: Rafael Humberto Larios López, Minister of Defense at the time of the murders; Juan Orlando Zepeda Herrera, colonel and at the time of the massacre, Vice Minister of Defense; Óscar Mariano Amaya Grimaldi, member of the Atlacatl battalion; Antonio Ramiro Ávalos Vargas, sergeant of the Atlacatl; Guillermo Alfredo Benavides Moreno, colonel and Director of the Military Academy; Juan Rafael Bustillo Toledo, general and Air Force Commander; Joaquín Arnaldo Cerna Flores, colonel and Chief of the Joint General Staff; Francisco Elena Fuentes, Chief of the First Infantry Brigade; José Ricardo Espinoza Guerra, lieutenant of the Atlacatl battalion; Gonzalo Guevara Cerritos, sub lieutenant of the Atlacatl battalion deported by the US in 2007; Carlos Mauricio Guzmán Aguilar, Salvadoran army colonel, and Director of the National Directorate of Intelligence (DNI); Óscar Alberto León Linares, commander of the Atlacatl and Tomás Zarpate Castillo, sergeant at the Atlacatl.

On the morning of November 16, 1989, in the midst of a bloody civil war, El Salvador and the world woke up to the news that six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and the housekeeper's daughter had been brutally murdered. A Truth Commission report revealed that the Salvadoran military planned and committed the crimes against the priests, who were outspoken critics of the military dictatorship. For the past 21 years, all efforts to obtain justice in El Salvador have been thwarted. In explaining the basis for

the issuance of the indictment and the arrest warrants, the judge explains that any claim of double jeopardy should fail because the 1990 trial held in El Salvador was a "sham trial."

CJA and APDHE originally filed the criminal case before the Spanish National Court on November 13, 2008 against members of the Salvadoran High Command and the Atlacatl battalion for their role in the Massacre. Among the victims: Ignacio Ellacuría, Ignacio Martín-Baró, Segundo Montes, Amando López, and Juan Ramon Moreno, who were born and ordained in Spain; and father Joaquin López y López, Elba Ramos, and her 15-year-old daughter Celina Meredith were Salvadoran.

CJA International Attorney Almudena Bernabeu and lead counsel on the case said, "We are very pleased the Spanish Executive processed these extraditions. We are hopeful Salvadoran and US authorities will observe national and international laws and treaties and will extradite the defendants, contributing that way to reverse the persistent impunity in this case. This step proves one more time, that no country or defendant is above the law; efforts to fight impunity for these and all Salvadoran victims will never stop until justice is achieved".

For more information on the criminal case against those responsible for the Jesuits Massacre see www.cja.org.

About CJA:

CJA is a San Francisco-based human rights organization dedicated to ending torture and other severe human rights abuses around the world and advancing the rights of survivors to seek truth, justice and redress. CJA pursues litigation to hold perpetrators individually accountable for human rights abuses, develop human rights law, and advance the rule of law in countries transitioning from abuses.

About APDHE:

APDHE, founded clandestinely in 1976 soon after the death of Dictator Francisco Franco, is the oldest human rights association in Spain. APDHE advocates among government agencies and civil society for the protection of human rights. APDHE has a long tradition of working for the promotion of human rights in Latin America.