



On Monday December 19, 2011, Inocente Orlando Montano will appear in Federal District Court in Boston to enter a plea to criminal charges of immigration fraud and perjury as indicated in an Information filed in the case on November 29, 2011. Montano is one of the indicted defendants in the case pending before the Spanish National Court for the November 16, 1989 murders of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter in El Salvador.

The indictments in Spain against 20 defendants (one now deceased) were the result of the case filed, as private prosecutors, by the Center for Justice and Accountability and its Spanish partner, the Spanish Association Pro Human Rights (APDHE) on November 13th 2008. After a two and half year, 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. The formal extradition request for Montano's transfer to Spanish jurisdiction to stand trial for the Jesuit killings will be forthcoming shortly. Inocente Montano was the Vice Minister of Defense for Public Security at the time of the killings and participated in meetings where the killing of Father Ignacio Ellacuría and his colleagues was discussed and ordered.

Montano has been a resident of the United States since at least 2001. In 2002, he applied for and became a beneficiary of Temporary Protected Status, a humanitarian immigration benefit for persons from designated countries, including El Salvador, who cannot return safely to their home country. According to the Information filed in the case, on his original application and each time he sought renewal of his status, Montano denied he had ever been in the armed forces of El Salvador, had ever participated in any group or organization that used weapons against any person and had ever received military training; Montano is accused in this document of knowingly perjuring himself when he gave these answers.

In fact, Montano was a member of one of the most powerful military classes in the history of El Salvador, the class of 1966, also called *La Tandoná* ("*tanda*" is the name given to a Salvadoran military graduating class; due to its large size, the class of 1966 was called *La Tandoná*). Bound together by loyalties to each other and with strong ties to other powerful classes from the Salvadoran military academy, the class of 1966 came of age during the worst of the state terror that characterized the period from 1979-1992 in El Salvador. Montano was first or second in command of various Salvadoran military battalions and brigades throughout the decade until he was elevated to one of the most powerful positions in the Salvadoran military, the Vice Minister of Defense for Public Security, alongside other members of his graduating class. The failure to disclose his military involvement fits within a broader pattern of cover ups, lies, obfuscations and denials characteristic of the Salvadoran military during this same period, including in the wake of the Jesuit murders.

After the Spanish indictment was issued, Montano gave an interview to a Salvadoran newspaper acknowledging he was living in the United State without any problems. During an interview with a Boston Globe reporter, CJA brought the interview to his attention; the reporter verified Montano's presence in a Boston suburb. Soon after the spotlight was shown on Montano in the Spanish case and by public exposure, he fled the jurisdiction. He was apprehended by U.S. agents in Virginia and returned to Massachusetts to face the immigration fraud charges.

At the hearing, Montano will enter a plea to the two count indictment. Depending on his plea, his case will be bound over for trial, or a sentencing hearing will be set. The assigned judge is Judge Douglas Woodlock. He is located in Courtroom One of Boston's John Joseph Moakley Federal Courthouse at 1 Courthouse Way. The setting is a fitting one, given that Congressman Moakley was the head of a Task Force empowered by Congress to investigate the assassinations. The "Moakley Task Force" was instrumental in uncovering the role of the Salvadoran military in planning and executing the crime.

For other updates on the *Jesuit Massacre Case* [click here](#).