



For Immediate Release
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**SPANISH NATIONAL COURT UPHOLDS SPANISH JURISDICTION TO INVESTIGATE THE
1989 MASSACRE OF JESUIT PRIESTS IN EL SALVADOR**

Adopting victims' arguments, Spain's Highest Court authorizes the investigation of crimes against humanity in El Salvador and orders the inclusion of all victims, regardless of nationality, in the case.

Madrid, Spain -- In a major reversal of recent legislation that curtailed Spanish jurisdiction over international crimes, the full Criminal Chambers of the Spanish National Court has decided unanimously that Spain has jurisdiction to investigate the November 16, 1989 massacre of the Jesuits at the Central American University and their two employees as a crime against humanity. Earlier in 2014, after the conservative Popular Party of Spain approved the Universal Jurisdiction reform, Judge Eloy Velasco, who had previously indicted 20 Salvadoran military officials for murder, terrorism, and crimes against humanity, rejected the crime against humanity claim and decided to continue only with terrorism. The Center for Justice & Accountability (CJA) and the Spanish Pro Human Rights Association (APDHE) filed an appeal, which led to the Criminal Chambers's decision to uphold our arguments and unanimously order the crimes against humanity claim to be preserved and restated. The panel further explained that upon having asserted jurisdiction over a set of criminal facts that constitute the state terrorism crime, Spanish Judges have jurisdiction over all other crimes connected to the facts investigated, even if that crime is a crime against humanity.

In a related proceeding, one of the defendants in the *Jesuits Massacre Case* in Spain, Colonel Inocente Orlando Montano, was found and arrested in Boston, Massachusetts. Montano was charged by U.S. authorities with immigration fraud and is currently serving a 21-month prison sentence in the United States. Spanish authorities have requested the extradition of Montano to Spain to face trial upon his release from prison. U.S. authorities are reviewing the request.

The *Jesuits Massacre Case* was originally filed by the San Francisco-based CJA and APDHE, a Spanish human rights association, on November 13, 2008. CJA and APDHE represent the family of one of the Spanish priests who was killed, Ignacio Martin Baro. Almudena Bernabeu, CJA's International Attorney and lead counsel in the case states:

This is a decisive decision to restore not only the legitimacy of the *Jesuits Massacre Case*, but the integrity of Universal Jurisdiction; jurisdiction that seeks to provide access to justice to all victims of crimes against humanity, regardless of their origin or residence. Spain has been an international example of the responsible application of the Nuremberg legacy and we are extremely pleased about the Judge's decision that will once again give human rights victims hope for justice.

The Jesuits Massacre was one of the great religious crimes of the 20th century and a major tipping point leading to the end of the 12-year Salvadoran Civil War. For more information about the Jesuits Massacre Case, [click here](#). For more information about the extradition of Montano, [click here](#).

About CJA:

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