

**- CONTACT -**



Almudena Bernabéu: +1 4153052097 / +34 648861629  
Carolyn Patty Blum +16466443887



<http://www.guernica37.org>



[clerks@guernica37.org](mailto:clerks@guernica37.org)



Calle Alcalá 131, 3º Izquierda  
28009 Madrid  
España

**Salvadoran Colonel Inocente Orlando Montano arrives in Madrid in police custody after the conclusion of his extradition process to stand trial for his involvement in the massacre of six Jesuit priests and two women in El Salvador in 1989.**

**PRESS RELEASE -**

- Today, after a 9-year legal battle, Salvadoran Colonel, Inocente Orlando Montano has been incarcerated in Madrid after being extradited from the United States. Tomorrow, he will make his first appearance before the Spanish National Court.
- In 2009, the Spanish National Court charged Montano with offences of Murder and Terrorism for his part in ordering the killing of six Jesuits priests, their housekeeper, and her 15-year-old daughter, on November 16, 1989 at the University of Central America in San Salvador. Known as the *Jesuits Massacre*, the crime generated widespread international condemnation, remains an emblematic crime for victims, and was a key catalyst to the ending of the Salvadoran armed conflict.
- Montano's arrival in Spain will mark the beginning of a long-awaited trial before the Spanish National Court. Five of the murdered priests were Spanish nationals, thus conferring on the Spanish Courts the necessary jurisdictional basis to investigate and prosecute the crime.

The Guernica Group

London – San Francisco - Madrid

W <http://www.guernicagroup.org> E [clerks@guernica37.org](mailto:clerks@guernica37.org)

**MADRID, November, 29 2017** – Today, Colonel Inocente Orlando Montano has arrived in Madrid after U.S. authorities handed him over to the custody of Spain to be extradited for prosecution on charges of Murder and Terrorism. Montano, appointed Deputy Minister for Public Security in El Salvador and a member of the Military High Command, is accused of contributing to the planning and ordering of the killing of the Jesuits priests, Ignacio Ellacuría, Ignacio Martín Baró, Segundo Montes, Juan Ramón Moreno, Amado López, and Joaquín López y López, as well as their employee Julia Elba and her daughter Celina Ramos.

In November 2008, Almudena Bernabéu, co-founder of the Guernica Group, along with lawyers Manuel Sesé Ollé, Carolyn Patty Blum, and the Spanish Association for Human Rights (APDHE), filed a criminal complaint before the Spanish National Court to pursue accountability on behalf of the victims. This complaint was the last resort for the victims’ families and the Jesuit community to achieve justice after the many frustrated attempts led by the Human Rights Institute at the UCA University. Up to this point, El Salvador’s broad amnesty law, and the unwillingness of its courts to pursue the architects of this crime, had impeded the investigation and prosecution of this tragic and paradigmatic massacre in the country.

After initially charging 14 Salvadoran officers for their part in this crime, Spanish National Court Judge Eloy Velasco conducted a rigorous investigation, over a two and half year period. In May 2011, he indicted six additional officers and issued 20 international arrest warrants. Although Judge Velasco requested Salvadoran authorities to extradite the defendants residing there, the Salvadoran Supreme Court denied the extradition requests.

After an investigation conducted by the victims’ attorneys, it was discovered that one of the accused, Colonel Montano, was living in the United States where he was apprehended by U.S. authorities and prosecuted and convicted of immigration-related fraud. Following an extradition request filed by Spain and pursued by the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Magistrate Judge Kimberly Swank issued a decision in February 2016, which certified to the Secretary of State that Montano was extraditable under U.S. law. Judge Swank concluded that the evidence showed that Montano “*was a decision-maker and member of a group of officers who collectively ordered the unlawful killings of Jesuit priests.*” Montano filed a petition for habeas corpus that was dismissed by U.S. District Judge Terrence Boyle in August 2017; he quickly appealed that decision but was denied a stay of execution of the arrest warrant by both the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Montano’s extradition represents an unparalleled legal success, as he is the highest-ranking foreign official in recent U.S. history to be extradited for human rights crimes.

The Guernica Group

London – San Francisco - Madrid

W <http://www.guernicagroup.org> E [clercks@guernica37.org](mailto:clercks@guernica37.org)

Professor Carolyn Patty Blum, who has closely monitored the US proceedings, stated, “*The U.S. Justice and State Departments are to be commended on their relentless dedication in this case. Led by Assistant U.S. Attorney John Capin in Boston, Massachusetts, the U.S. government team has given voice to the cries for justice for the murdered priests that the Salvadoran people long have demanded.*”

Almudena Bernabéu, who will lead the trial in Spain, states: “*After 9 years of difficult and great work, Montano’s arrival to Spain brings hope not only to the families and the Jesuit community but to all victims of El Salvador who have been waiting for justice since the end of the war. This trial offers an opportunity for truth and justice, even if taking place in Spain, and is an effective step towards ending impunity in El Salvador. This trial also underscores the need for national jurisdictions like Spain, to open their courts to victims of human right abuses. We are honoured we can lead this effort.*”

---

*Guernica37 International Justice Chambers in London, the non-profit organization Guernica Centre for International Justice in the United States, and G37 Despacho Internacional in Madrid, form the Guernica Group. Our international team of lawyers specialize in International Criminal Law and strategic transnational litigation to obtain accountability for international crimes and human rights violations. The Guernica Group seeks to contribute to national processes of accountability by designing legal strategies in partnership with key actors in countries experiencing conflict or in post-conflict situations.*

*Founded in 1976, the Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de España (APDHE), is the oldest organization in Spain specifically devoted to the defense and promotion of human rights. Since its founding, the APDHE has devoted itself to the growth and development of democratic institutions in Spain, promoting education and community outreach around the issues of human rights and peace, cooperation with academic institutions and associations of lawyers in the promotion of human rights, creation and dissemination of periodic reports and publications and participation in legal action to promote and defend human rights in Spain, Latin America and worldwide.*

**The Guernica Group**

London – San Francisco - Madrid

W <http://www.guernicagroup.org> E [clercks@guernica37.org](mailto:clercks@guernica37.org)