

## EL SALVADOR

### *US deports Salvadoran general for 1980s assassinations*

#### **Gen. Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova is the highest-ranking foreign official to be deported under laws enacted in 2004 to prevent human rights violators from seeking haven in the US**

In a precedent-setting ruling on March 11, 2015, the US Board of Immigration Appeals, found that General Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova had participated in torture and killings of civilians by virtue of his “command responsibility” when he led the National Guard and then the country’s military, from 1979 to 1989. On March 27, a federal appeals court denied his request to halt the deportation.

Gen. Vides Casanova had been trained by the US at the infamous School of Americas in the early 1980s, National Guardsmen under his command were identified as the murderers of four US church women. Nonetheless, the Reagan Administration supported Vides Casanova’s rise to position of defense minister. In 1989 he was admitted entry to the US and retired in Florida.

This was not the general’s first visit to a US court. In 2000 he was acquitted on charges filed by the family of slain Maryknoll missionary Ita Ford. In 2002 a different jury favored torture victims: they ruled against Vides Casanova and another former defense minister, Gen. José Guillermo García, in a class action suit brought by Dr. Juan Romagoza et. al. In 2006 Vides Casanova relinquished \$300,000 of the \$54.6 million verdict levied against them.

The US Department of Homeland Security opened the deportation case against Gen. Vides Casanova in 2009. On April 8, 2015, the US deported Gen. Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova back to El Salvador.

#### **Another SOA graduate faces extradition**

In 1989, former Salvadoran Vice Minister of Public Safety **Colonel Inocente Orlando Montano** conspired with other high commanders to murder six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her sixteen-year old daughter. Montano never faced justice for his crime until the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) filed the Jesuits Massacre Case in Spain\* and secured an indictment. As a direct result of CJA’s investigation and Spanish case, Montano was discovered in Boston and was arrested by U.S. authorities. The U.S. government charged Montano not for the massacre but for committing immigration fraud and perjury by lying about his role in the massacre and other human rights abuses on his immigration forms.

Spain has requested Montano’s extradition to stand trial for the human rights violations. On April 8, 2015, the U.S. government filed a request seeking the extradition to Spain of Col. Montano for his role in the 1989 Jesuit massacre.

Montano is being held at the Pitt County Detention Center near Greenville, N.C. , while he awaits a US federal court decision on the extradition request.

\*Montano and 19 other former Salvadoran military officers have been charged by Spain with murder and terrorism. Five of the six priests massacred at the University of Central America in 1989 were Spanish nationals.

*And another...*

In December 2015, the US Board of Immigration Appeals upheld an order of deportation against former **Salvadoran Gen. José Guillermo García**. The US established that García protected death squads and "assisted or otherwise participated in" 14 assassinations, six massacres, and the torture of three individuals in addition to the torture and killings of countless civilians by forces under his command, including:

- Archbishop Romero
- Río Sumul massacre
- four US church women
- El Mozote massacre

#### **Rapid Response Network**

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IRTF calls together the people of northeast Ohio to walk in solidarity with oppressed peoples of Central America and Colombia to achieve peace, justice, human rights, and systemic transformation through nonviolence.

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