

Historic but insufficient condemnation



Inocente Orlando Montano, guilty of murder in El Salvador.

The National Court of Spain issued a severe sentence to the colonel and former deputy minister of Public Security of El Salvador, Inocente Orlando Montano, for the murder of five priests of the Jesuit order in 1989, including the well-known theologian and analyst Ignacio Ellacuría.

The crime was committed in San Salvador on the grounds of the Central American University José Simeón Cañas, UCA, for its Spanish initials, where Ellacuría was director.

The punishment comes 31 years after the murders and is considered historic, but insufficient for several reasons, first of all because there were eight victims of the attack.

It turns out that Orlando Montano was detained in the United States at the request of the Spanish justice system, but the local authorities allowed his extradition on the condition that he could only be tried for the death of the five European citizens.

This means that the murders of Salvadoran Jesuit Joaquín López y López, the university cook Julia Elba Ramos, and her 15-year-old daughter Celina Mariceth Ramos remain unpunished.

In addition, the intellectual perpetrators of the massacre, the military leadership at the time, remain free of any charges.

The Jesuits were killed because they were considered "dangerous" by the armed forces, due to reports of massacres and unnecessary violence against the civilian population. They also requested the restructuring of the army and initiating peace talks with the insurgent Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front.

After learning of the 130-year sentence for Montano, the UCA expressed in a statement its hope that this trial would serve as an incentive for all those linked to this crime in El Salvador, both the masterminds and the executors, to be brought before the courts.

The text continues, as long as the Armed Forces do not apologize at an institutional level for the serious crimes committed in the past and do not cooperate with justice by opening their files, it will be difficult for them to be considered a democratic institution that respects human rights.

The remains of those already known as UCA Martyrs rest in a chapel, and it is moving to see the respect, admiration and affection they inspire not only among the religious and educational community, but for everyone who visits that place.

This is an example of how far hate and fear can go, for those who use power at all costs to preserve their privileges and defend the wealth of voracious oligarchies that despise the lives and rights of others.

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