

US Requests Salvadoran Ex Colonel's Extradition over Links with Jesuit Deaths



Washington, April 09 (teleSUR-RHC) The U.S. government asked a North Carolina court on Wednesday to approve the extradition of a Salvadoran former colonel and minister to Spain, for the murders of six Jesuit priests, including five Spaniards, in 1989.

Inocente Montano, 72, was serving a 21-month prison sentence in North Carolina for lying over his migration status, so he could remain in the United States and avoid a trial in his country.

The U.S. Department of Justice then linked Montano with Spain's 2011 request of extraditing 20 military officers responsible for the murders of Jesuit priests during the Salvadorian civil war (1980-1992).

Montano allegedly killed six Jesuits — five from Spain — and two Salvadorian women (a cook and her daughter) on Nov. 16, 1989, in the University of Central America (UCA).

"The day before the assassinations, Montano participated in various meetings and, in the last one, one of the officials, in the presence of Montano, ordered to kill Father Ignacio Ellacuría without leaving witnesses," stated the U.S. request to the North Carolina court.

As Vice-Minister of National Defense at the time, Montano was in charge of the state-owned radio that “broadcasted threats to the priest and his fellows a few days before the crime,” added the statement.

“This is a huge step toward justice and individual criminal accountability,” lawyer Almudena Bernabéu, who represents the priests in the case via the Center of Justice and Accountability (CJA), told EFE.

The San Francisco-based center filed a lawsuit in 2008 before the Spanish court, along with the Association Pro Human Rights of Spain.

If the North Carolina court accepts the extradition, Montano will face up to 30 years in prison over the charges of assassinations, terrorism and crime against humanity.

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