



LAWYERS WITHOUT BORDERS  
AVOCATS SANS FRONTIERES  
ABOGADOS SIN FRONTERAS  
Canada

NEWS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE CIRCULATION

*Jorge Vinicio Sosa Orantes, presently detained in Calgary, is accused of having perpetrated a massacre in Guatemala*

**Lawyers Without Borders, victims' lawyer and sole massacre survivor call on Canada not to let Canadian citizen escape justice for alleged crimes against humanity**

Calgary, November 28, 2011 – At a press conference held in Calgary this Monday, Lawyers Without Borders Canada (LWBC), the Canadian Centre for International Justice, a Guatemalan lawyer representing the families of the victims of a massacre perpetrated in Guatemala in 1982 and one of the massacre's sole survivors called on Canada not to let Mr. Jorge Vinicio Sosa Orantes escape justice. Mr. Sosa Orantes, a Guatemalan who also holds Canadian and US citizenships, is presently detained in Calgary. He is accused of having participated in the massacre of more than 200 civilians in the community of Las Dos Erres, Guatemala.

In a decision issued on September 2, 2011, the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta ruled that Mr. Sosa Orantes could be extradited to the USA where he is wanted for immigration fraud. The Canadian Department of Justice recently authorized such extradition. *"However, Mr. Sosa Orantes has to be brought to justice not for a mere infraction to immigration laws but for the gross crimes against humanity he is accused of having committed,"* said Pascal Paradis, LWBC's executive director. *"Unfortunately, this is not legally possible in the USA whereas Canada can investigate and eventually charge Mr. Sosa Orantes under the Canadian Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act".*

*"Between December 6 and 8, 1982, members of a specially trained counter-insurgency unit of the Guatemalan armed forces entered the village of Las Dos Erres where I lived, removed community members from their homes, gathered them together, and, after raping and torturing numerous women and children, assassinated virtually everyone in the community. The death toll reached more than 200, almost only I could escape,"* recounted Mr. Ramiro Osorio Cristales, who was a young boy at the time. He now is a Canadian citizen. *"I really wish that Canada will stand for justice in this case",* he added.

In its ruling, the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta stated that *"The evidence of the massacre at Dos Erres clearly establishes that Sosa was present and involved; that he actively participated in the killings with a sledgehammer, with a firearm and a grenade. The evidence also clearly establishes that he was one of the commanding officers that took the decision to slaughter 171 men, women and children. It is difficult for this Court to comprehend the murderous acts of depraved cruelty on the scale disclosed by the evidence. This conduct is criminal in any civilization."*

*"On August 2, 2011, a Guatemalan court rendered a historic decision in which four ex-military members were convicted of crimes against humanity and each condemned to more than 6,000 years of imprisonment for their participation in the Dos Erres*

massacre”, said Edgar Fernando Pérez Archila, the lawyer who represented the victims’ families in the Guatemalan case. *“The families now want justice to be done for the crimes against humanity charges against Mr. Sosa Orantes, not only for immigration fraud, and their desire is that he be tried in Canada, where he is now detained and where one of the sole massacre survivors lives”*, he continued.

*“We hope that the Department of Justice will reconsider his decision to surrender Mr. Sosa Orantes to the USA and will instead instruct the Canadian Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Section to investigate the case and eventually bring charges”*, said Mr. Paradis. *“Alternatively, the Department could seek assurances from the USA that Mr. Sosa Orantes will be extradited back to Guatemala or Canada to face justice for the more important charges once he has been convicted and served his sentence in the USA. The fight against impunity for the worst type of crimes commands no less”*, concluded Mr. Paradis.

Mr. Paradis, Pérez and Osorio will be in Calgary, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City this week to address the Canadian public and legal community about the massacre of Las Dos Erres and the case of Mr. Sosa Orantes.

\*\*\*

**About Lawyers Without Borders Canada:** LWBC ([www.asfcanada.ca](http://www.asfcanada.ca)) is an international cooperation non-governmental organization registered as a charity in Canada. Its core mission is to help defend the human rights of the most vulnerable persons and groups by reinforcing access to justice and legal representation. LWBC runs an international cooperation program in Guatemala aiming at reinforcing victims’ legal representation for the strategic litigation of human rights abuses. The recent advances in the Dos Erres Guatemalan court case can be attributed to the courage of the Guatemalan Courts and to the hard work of family members of those killed in the massacre, civil society and prosecutors, as well as that of the Guatemalan human rights lawyers whose work is actively supported by LWBC.

\*\*\*

## **PUBLIC EVENTS**

### **CALGARY      Tuesday, November 29, 2011, 2:00 PM**

The moot court room #2370 (Murray Fraser Hall)  
University of Calgary, 2500 University Dr. NW

### **OTTAWA:      Wednesday, November 30, 2011, 8:30 AM**

University of Ottawa  
Room 202, Fauteux Building, 57 Louis Pasteur Street

### **MONTREAL:      Thursday, December 1ST, 2011, 5:00 PM**

Université du Québec à Montréal  
Room A-1715, Hubert-Aquin Building, 400 Sainte-Catherine Street East

### **QUEBEC CITY:      Friday, December 2, 2011, 11:30 AM to 1 PM**

Université Laval  
Room 2413, De Koninck Building, 1030 Sciences-Humaines