

Center for Justice and Accountability

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://cja.org/what-we-do/litigation/romagoza-arce-v-garcia-and-vides-casanova/>

Campaign and Advocacy

As former defense ministers of El Salvador, Generals Jos Guillermo Garca and Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova presided over the disappearance, killing, and torture of over 75,000 civilians during the Salvadoran Civil War. In 2002, CJA won a civil case against the former generals, holding them accountable for war crimes committed under their leadership. Since the landmark ruling that awarded \$54.6 million in damages to our clients, both men have been removed from the United States because of CJAs advocacy efforts.

In December 1979, the Salvadoran National Guard detained Neris Gonzlez then an 8-month pregnant health care and agrarian reform activist. The guardsmen tortured her continuously for two weeks. While Gonzlez eventually gave birth, her son died shortly after due to the severity of the injuries he sustained in utero.

A year later, in December 1980, Dr. Juan Romagoza was providing medical care in a rural church clinic when two vehicles arrived carrying Salvadoran National Guardsmen and paramilitary soldiers. The soldiers and guardsmen opened fire on the clinic. They later arrested Romagoza and detained him at National Guard headquarters for 22 days. He was repeatedly tortured, interrogated, and purposely shot in the left hand, which permanently affected his ability to perform surgery.

Gonzlez and Romagoza are two of CJAs clients from our 2002 civil suit against Vides Casanova and Garca, two high-ranking military officials responsible for the torture of our clients and countless others during El Salvadors campaign of terror during the civil war.

CJAs suit resulted in a landmark verdict: both Vides Casanova and Garca were found liable and ordered to pay \$54.6 million in damages. It was one of the first times that a jury in a fully contested trial found perpetrators responsible for human rights abuses under the doctrine of command responsibility.

After the trial, CJA participated in a congressional hearing and promoted the removal proceedings of the generals from the country.

Vides Casanova and Garca were deported back to El Salvador after immigration judges found them responsible for human rights crimes, including the torture of CJAs clients.



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GERALD GRAY LEGACY CIRCLE

GERALD GRAY FOUNDED CJA IN 1998 AND CONTINUES
WORKING TO HELP TORTURE SURVIVORS TODAY.

Join the Gerald Gray Legacy Circle

To join, please let us know that you have included CJA in your estate plans, insurance policy, or planned giving instrument by contacting us at center4justice@cja.org. We will ensure your gift supports CJA's mission and welcome you to the Gerald Gray Legacy Circle.

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***"We will never catch all the torturers—but we will always catch some,
and none of them will ever know who is next."***