

Center for Justice and Accountability

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

<https://cja.org/what-we-do/litigation/reyes-v-lopez-grijalba/>

Campaign and Advocacy

In the late 1970s and early 80s, a Honduran death squad called Battalion 316 carried out a series of forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and torture against suspected political subversives: more than 150 persons were killed or disappeared. In 2006, CJA brought Juan Lpez Grijalba to trial in U.S. federal court for overseeing this notorious death squad. Lpez Grijalba was ordered to pay \$47 million in damages to our six clients, all of whom survived torture or had family members killed or disappeared under Grijalba. CJAs case was the first in which a Honduran military leader was held liable for human rights abuses.

The Honduran government created the army unit Battalion 316 to collect intelligence on suspected political opponents of the government. Battalion 316 kidnapped, tortured and assassinated hundreds of Honduran civilians. More than 150 persons were killed or disappeared.

As former chief of military intelligence, Juan Lpez Grijalba exercised principal command and control over this death squad.

Lpez Grijalba moved to the Miami area in 1998 where he lived until immigration officials arrested him in 2002. CJA filed a civil case in the United States against him soon after his arrest.

We filed the case on behalf of six torture survivors and families of the disappeared, including Oscar and Gloria Reyes, who were abducted from their home along with their 12-year-old daughter and two employees. Oscar and Gloria were detained for more than five months and endured brutal torture at the hands of interrogators under Lpez Grijalbas command.

While Oscar and Gloria managed to escape and were exiled to the United States, many other individuals who were disappeared werent as lucky: they simply never returned.

One of the disappeared was Manfredo Velsquezat the time a teacher, graduate student and student union leaderwho was abducted in broad daylight in September 1982. His family and friends never saw him again.

In 2004, based in part on information provided by CJA, Lpez Grijalba was denied protected status and deported to Honduras.

In 2006, CJA received a default judgment in its U.S. civil suit. The court held Lpez Grijalba liable for torture, extrajudicial killings and disappearances and ordered him to pay \$47 million to our six clients.

The Attorney General of Honduras approached CJA in May 2006 to assist in a criminal prosecution of Lpez Grijalba for human rights abuses based on evidence developed in our U.S. civil case.



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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."***