

Center for Justice and Accountability

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

<https://cja.org/what-we-do/litigation/legal-strategy/>

Mission Statement

CJA's vision is a world in which justice thrives where every nation has the capacity and willingness to prosecute human rights criminals and achieve justice for those most marginalized in society.

This may not be possible as judicial systems take time to (re)build after periods of despotism or conflict. Those who have been grievously injured should not have to wait until the judicial and political systems are functioning to seek justice. CJA supports a system of international justice that makes available multiple forums to afford an opportunity for justice to be served.

At the same time, CJA uses the interplay of these transnational legal strategies to outflank systems of entrenched impunity and build global constituencies for accountability in the home country. For example, CJA will use extraterritorial litigation in the United States or Europe to create a record of evidence, raise public awareness, and put diplomatic pressure on the home country to meet its obligations to investigate and prosecute human rights crimes.

We use this multi-pronged approach to address the most egregious crimes from the massacre of Jesuit priests in El Salvador to the execution of dissidents in Somalia. The interconnectedness of our work can be seen in the structure of our litigation pages. Each crime that we focus on lists the various forums that CJA advances the claims of survivors and victims. The main forums include:

U.S. Court: In the United States, CJA files civil lawsuits against human rights abusers who reside in or visit the country. Under the [Alien Tort Statute](#) and the [Torture Victim Protection Act](#), victims of human rights violations from anywhere in the world can seek justice in U.S. courts. After we win our cases, CJA will continue to push for accountability through bankruptcy court actions and immigration proceedings. If there are defendants residing in the U.S., CJA helps advocate for their extradition to face criminal trial at home.

Foreign National Court: CJA believes that foreign domestic courts will increasingly take the lead in prosecuting human rights crimes within their borders, adopting international human rights norms in the process. Guatemala has led in prosecuting its former head of state, General Ros Montt, for the genocide of the Mayan Ixil community. International pressure will assist in helping develop the rule of law in nations. CJA joined the original criminal case against General Ros Montt in [Spain](#). Other countries will assert [Universal Jurisdiction](#) to address the most egregious crimes committed by perpetrators found within their borders.

International or Hybrid Tribunal: International mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and international tribunals will continue to play an important role in the international justice and accountability. CJA, along with national Cambodian organization Legal Aid Cambodia, represents 45 Civil Parties before the [Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia \(ECCC\)](#) against the two remaining senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge. CJA's clients are all members of the Cambodian diaspora living in the United States. We have also advanced a case before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Transitional Justice: CJA's transitional justice projects help lay the groundwork for national human rights prosecutions. We help build evidence for these cases and advise on legal strategies.



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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."***