The El Mozote Massacre War Time Crime Trial

WHAT HAPPENED

• **1981:** the Atlacatl Battalion, an elite Salvadoran military unit trained and armed by the United States, **massacred 1,000 civilians**, mostly children, in northeastern El Salvador.
  
  The operation was part of the Salvadoran government’s strategy to terrorize the population and eliminate any possible support for guerrilla groups in the region.

• **1993:** after El Salvador’s civil war ended, an amnesty law was passed, epitomizing a pervasive attitude that crimes will not be punished and victims do not matter. As a result, El Mozote is one of the **major unprosecuted war time crimes in the world.**

• **2016:** the Salvadoran Supreme Court overturned the amnesty law and, since then, war time criminal investigations were reopened.

• **Today:** Cristosal, in coordination with Tutela Legal “María Julia Hernández,” is supporting the prosecution of the El Mozote case against 17 ex-officers of El Salvador’s military.

• 31 witnesses have come forward and testified in court.

• The trial is now moving forward to the expert witness phase.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

• Success in this emblematic case would restore credibility in the Salvadoran justice system. It can send a powerful message about truth and justice all over the continent.

• **David Morales,** former Human Rights Ombudsperson and private prosecutor representing the victims in El Mozote case, stated: “the case is essential for establishing a climate in which peacemaking is possible.”

• **Wilfredo Medrano,** co-prosecutor representing the victims in the El Mozote case, affirmed: “The future of Salvadoran justice depends on El Mozote.”

TAKE ACTION

• **Call for** the release of relevant Salvadoran and U.S. military and intelligence files: information contained therein is a key element in the prosecution of responsible officers.

• **Request** statements from the United States government expressing support for the Salvadoran judicial system in prosecuting the El Mozote case, and support for the cooperation of the Salvadoran Defense Minister and Attorney General’s Office in the case.

• **Learn more and donate** at www.cristosal.org/el-mozote.