The Massacre of El Mozote and the Surrounding Areas

Dec. 11, 1981 - An elite Salvadoran military unit trained and armed by the United States massacred 1,000 civilians—mostly children—in and around the village of El Mozote. It is the largest massacre in Latin America’s modern history.

1993 - The Salvadoran Legislative Assembly passes a post-war amnesty law protecting the perpetrators of the massacre, as well as the perpetrators of other, equally heinous crimes committed during the armed conflict.

2016 - After more than 20 years the amnesty law is finally overturned by the Salvadoran Supreme Court. This opens the door for the case of the El Mozote massacre and many other war crime cases to be tried in court.

2017 - Cristosal and our partner organization, Tutela Legal, begin prosecuting 17 ex-officers of El Salvador’s military high command for allegedly planning and ordering the massacre. The following year, 41 survivors and victims’ family members testified in court for the first time in over 35 years.

2018 - Rodolfo Parker, a deputy in the Salvadoran Legislative Assembly and former lawyer for the Armed Forces, proposes the “National Reconciliation Law.” This law would effectively create a new amnesty for crimes committed during the armed conflict.

2019 - With Parker’s recently proposed law, progress made on the El Mozote case, and many similar cases from the period, are under. Furthermore, it represents a violation of the victims’ right to truth, justice, and reconciliation on their own terms.

"[A positive outcome for El Mozote] would, of course, be a very positive milestone for the justice system in El Salvador, but also for the strengthening of democracy and the state of human rights in El Salvador." - David Morales, Director of Strategic Litigation at Cristosal

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