



## News Release

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### **U.S. Congressman James McGovern, Children of the Disappeared of the Salvadoran Civil War and other American Officials Will Travel to El Salvador For Talks with Top Salvadoran Officials**

BERKELEY, CALIF. Jan. 19, 2017 -- On Jan. 26, 2017, for the first time since the end of the Salvadoran civil war 25 years ago, Salvadoran-Americans who came to the United States as infants in the 1980s will travel to El Salvador to seek resolution and answers about the identification and location of the remains of their parents who were forcibly abducted and “disappeared” during the civil war.

This historic delegation will be accompanied by U.S. Congressman James McGovern and other concerned Americans from the academic, religious and human rights communities in the United States. They will meet with Salvadoran government officials, including the President of El Salvador, Salvador Sánchez Cerén.

The delegation will be led by the Mauricio Aquino Foundation, based in Berkeley, Calif., in collaboration with the Washington D.C.-based Due Process of Law Foundation and the Washington Office of Latin America.

During the Salvadoran Civil War, which lasted from 1979 until 1992, approximately 10,000 Salvadorans were “disappeared” or forcibly abducted by government forces and never seen again. Thousands of their surviving children and spouses came to the United States as refugees from that war. Other children were themselves kidnapped, disappeared, and given in adoption by members of security forces and the armed forces.

The Mauricio Aquino Foundation organized the “Our Parents’ Bones” Campaign in 2014 to raise awareness about the disappeared (*desaparecidos*), and to seek resolution by locating the remains of the disappeared.

Our Parents’ Bones reunites the surviving American children and spouses of the disappeared who today live in cities across the United States. These survivors are now U.S. citizens, and they are calling upon the U.S. authorities and their representatives in Congress for help in persuading the Salvadoran government to take action in the effort to locate the remains of the disappeared.



This historic delegation will continue the progress of the Our Parents' Bones campaign, which already has the following significant accomplishments:

- 1) Our Parents' Bones Campaign has enlisted the help of 27 members of the U.S. Congress to formally ask President Barack Obama to declassify U.S. documents pertaining to forced disappearances during the Salvadoran civil war.
- 2) Our Parents' Bones Campaign has inspired nearly two dozen members of the U.S. Congress to send letters to the Salvadoran President asking for the creation of a National Commission for the Search of the Disappeared and the declassification of files.
- 3) Our Parents' Bones Campaign has enabled Salvadoran Americans in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston and Washington, D.C., to gather and begin the important process of healing and building a stronger movement.

Salvadoran organizations will organize a public forum sponsored by the Central American University José Simeón Cañas (UCA) where delegation participants will hear from other surviving relatives of victims of forced disappearances. The delegation will also visit the Wall Memorial to the War Victims where many of the names of their parents are engraved.

Attached is a tentative schedule for the delegation's trip to El Salvador.

The Our Parents' Bones campaign is a project of The Mauricio Aquino Foundation, a nonprofit (501(c)(3)) organization. MAF's mission is the resolution of forced disappearances, the eradication of institutional impunity and the building of democratic institutions based on truth and reconciliation in El Salvador. For more information about the foundation, visit <http://www.ourparentsbones.org/mauricio-aquino-foundation/>.

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