

FROM: GREAT COMMUNICATORS, INC.
David Stiefel
2625 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 101
Coral Gables, FL 33134
305-448-1456, ext. 11
dstiefel@greatcom.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MASSACRE VICTIMS FILE SUIT IN CONNECTICUT FEDERAL COURT
AGAINST FORMER PRESIDENT OF MEXICO**

MIAMI, September 19, 2011– A lawsuit alleging war crimes and other crimes against humanity against Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, President of Mexico from 1994-2000, was filed Friday, September 16 in Connecticut federal court by the Miami law firm of Rafferty Kober Tenenholtz Bounds & Hess, P.A. Zedillo now resides in Connecticut, where he teaches at Yale University in New Haven.

The suit centers on a massacre of December 22, 1997, when paramilitary groups – armed, supported, and trained by Mexican armed forces members as part of a counter-insurgency plan – slaughtered 45 men, women and children in the village of Acteal, in the State of Chiapas, Mexico, while wounding many others. The Plaintiffs are among the survivors, widows and children of some victims.

The Acteal Massacre sprang from the Mexican government's implementation of "El Plan de Campaña Chiapas '94," a secret Mexican governmental document outlining a plan to crush the insurgent Zapatista

movement of the 1990s. Central to that Plan was the creation and deployment of paramilitary and civilian self-defense forces to assist military operations, including illegally arming civilians with military weapons.

Zedillo later conspired with Jorge Madrazo Cuellar, Mexico's Solicitor General and Attorney General, to cover up Zedillo's role before and during the Acteal Massacre. As part of that cover-up, about 128 people from the area near Acteal were rounded up and arrested. In October 2007, 34 were convicted of various crimes, including homicide and aggravated battery, and many were sentenced to 26 years in prison. In August 2009, however, the Mexican Supreme Court overturned 20 of those convictions due to prosecutorial misconduct, including fabricating evidence and violations of criminal and constitutional law, and ordered the prisoners released after 11 years.

The cover-up continued for years after Zedillo left power in 2000. For example, a special prosecutor nominated in 2007 to investigate the Acteal Massacre was ordered by Chiapas' Minister of Justice not to take testimony from Zedillo or Zedillo's chief of staff, Liebano Saenz. Not until the Mexican Supreme Court disclosed such critical facts in August 2009 did the public

and the Acteal victims finally learn the truth being hidden by the long-running cover-up of the Mexican national scandal.

Notwithstanding the recent discovery of these facts and schemes, the victims and their surviving families have continued to be frustrated in their attempts to hold their own government responsible for the Acteal Massacre. Fortunately, United States federal statutory law allows the injured Plaintiffs a means to seek justice against Zedillo. The Alien Torts Claim Act and the related Torture Victim Protection Act, among others, afford foreigners the right to pursue legal remedies in U.S. courts.

After months of preparation and investigation, the Miami, Florida firm of Rafferty Kobert Tenenholtz Bounds & Hess, P.A., filed the Complaint, along with Connecticut law firm Matthew Dallas Gordon LLC. The victims are proceeding anonymously, to protect them from likely reprisals if their identities were revealed. Accordingly, their lawyers cannot supply any information as to the victims' identities, other than that they are four women and six men.

Additional information, including a copy of the Complaint and certain key documents and photographs, can be found at acteal97.com.