

2-23-2005

## Ex-President Zedillo Named in Lawsuit, Nominated for World Bank Post

LADB Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex>

---

### Recommended Citation

LADB Staff. "Ex-President Zedillo Named in Lawsuit, Nominated for World Bank Post." (2005). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex/4833>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in SourceMex by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [amywinter@unm.edu](mailto:amywinter@unm.edu).

## **Ex-President Zedillo Named in Lawsuit, Nominated for World Bank Post**

*by LADB Staff*

*Category/Department: Mexico*

*Published: 2005-02-23*

Former President Ernesto Zedillo, who has kept a low profile since leaving office in 2000, has suddenly found himself in the spotlight as a result of policies he promoted during his administration. In recent weeks, Zedillo has become the subject of a complaint filed before the Inter-American Court on Human Rights (IACHR), and he has been added to a list of names proposed to succeed outgoing World Bank president James Wolfensohn.

### *Chiapas-based organization takes Zedillo to human rights court*

The IACHR complaint against Zedillo was filed by the Chiapas-based Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolome de las Casas (CDHFBC), which accused the former president and several military leaders in his administration of supporting the creation of paramilitary groups to suppress sympathizers of the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional (EZLN) in Chiapas. The complaint was filed in October 2004 but only gained wide attention in February of this year. There was no word from the IACHR on whether the complaint was accepted and if so, how long an investigation would take.

The EZLN attained worldwide attention by taking over the town of San Cristobal de las Casas on Jan. 1, 1994, to protest the date the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took effect (see SourceMex, 1994-01-12 and 1994-01-19). The uprising was intended to send a message to then President Carlos Salinas de Gortari that the government's neoliberal economic policies were creating poverty in Mexico, in particular among indigenous communities (see SourceMex, 1994-02-23).

CDHFBC director Blanca Martinez said her organization has documented 123 murders, dozens of cases of kidnappings, and the forced displacement of some 13,000 people from their homes. The most infamous case involved the massacre in Acteal, where paramilitary groups with close ties to the former governing Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) killed 45 EZLN sympathizers in December 1997 (see SourceMex, 1999-01-07 and 1998-01-014).

The CDHFBC complaint underscores previous accusations against the Zedillo government's policies in Chiapas (see SourceMex, 1999-01-20). In its complaint before the IACHR, the CDHFBC said the Mexican Army bears responsibility for the deaths and kidnappings because it helped create the paramilitary groups. Zedillo's name was listed at the top of the complaint because of his role as supreme commander of the Mexican armed forces from 1994 to 2000.

Also listed in the complaint were former defense secretary Gen. Enrique Cervantes and Gen. Mario Renan Castillo, commander of the Mexican Army's Seventh Military Region, which had jurisdiction over Chiapas. Zedillo's government repeatedly denied any links to the paramilitary groups, which it

said it tried to dismantle. The Zedillo administration was, however, instrumental in beefing up the presence of the Army near areas controlled by the EZLN (see SourceMex, 2000-05-24).

### *Fox government urged to cooperate with investigation*

The CDHFBC and other human rights advocates have urged President Vicente Fox's administration to cooperate with any IACHR investigation. "We ask the federal government to collaborate with the commission to bring to justice those who are guilty, repair the damage to the victims, and guarantee measures so this won't happen again," said Roman Catholic Bishop Raul Vera of the Diocese of Saltillo in the northern state of Coahuila.

Vera was previously coadjutor bishop in the diocese of San Cristobal de las Casas, which at that time was under the direction of Bishop Samuel Ruiz. Vera had been widely expected to succeed Ruiz, who retired in 1999 (see SourceMex, 1999-12-01). Instead, the Vatican sent Vera to Saltillo in what was labeled as a politically motivated move (see SourceMex, 2000-01-19).

Interior Secretary Santiago Creel was noncommittal on whether the Fox administration would play any direct role in an IACHR investigation, but noted that the CDHFBC complaint should be taken seriously. "This is a legitimate organization," Creel said of the Chiapas-based center. If the Fox government proceeds with an investigation of its own, said Creel, the matter would be placed in the hands of Ignacio Carrillo, the special prosecutor appointed to investigate the government's dirty war against leftists in the 1960s and 1970s.

Zedillo, currently director of the Center for the Study of Globalization at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, dismissed the CDHFBC charges as a "total calumny" and a product of leftist attacks on his record. "All I can say to you is that I regret that it's so easy for some people to mislead others, even about things that are in the public record in a very transparent way," the former president wrote in an email message to the Yale Daily News.

### *Ex-president proposed as candidate to head World Bank*

Zedillo, who obtained a doctorate in economics from Yale in 1981 and is a strong proponent of neoliberalism, is being mentioned in an early list of candidates to succeed Wolfensohn, whose term at the World Bank expires May 31. Zedillo would not be considered for the position if the US and Europe continued their informal agreement of appointing a US citizen to head the World Bank and a European to direct the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The New York Times, in a recent editorial, urged the US to break away from the tradition of appointing a US citizen and instead consider a host of qualified individuals from other countries. "That tradition has outlived its time," said the newspaper. "The decisions made by the bank's president can literally mean life or death for hundreds of millions of people."

The Times mentioned Zedillo's name along with Brazilian ex-President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and former and current finance ministers Gordon Brown of Britain, Trevor Manuel of South Africa, Leszek Balcerowicz of Poland, and Kemal Dervis of Turkey. The London-based Financial Times also criticized the method by which the World Bank and IMF leaders are selected. "The tradition that the US nominates the president of the World Bank and the Europeans the managing director of the IMF

is indefensible," said the newspaper. "A superior approach would be to initiate a transparent search for the best candidate in the whole world."

The Financial Times then strongly endorsed Zedillo for the post. "The ideal candidate would be someone from a developing country committed to market-led development, democracy and the rule of law," said the Financial Times. "Mr. Zedillo meets these requirements in full." (Sources: Yale Daily News, 02/14/05; La Crisis, Reuters, Knight-Ridder Newspapers, Agencia de noticias Proceso, 02/15/05; The Herald-Mexico City, 02/11/05, 02/16/05; The New York Times, 02/19/05; The Financial Times-London, 02/21/05; Spanish news service EFE, 02/16/05, 02/22/05; La Jornada, 02/10/05, 02/11/05, 02/14-17/05, 02/22/05, 02/23/05; El Universal, 02/23/05)

-- End --