



## STATEMENT ON THE DECISION OF CLOSING THE OFFICE OF TUTELA LEGAL

Pax Christi International regrets the sudden closure of the Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado de San Salvador (Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador), one of the most emblematic organizations working for the defense of the rights of the victims of the Salvadoran conflict, and one of the member organizations of our global peace network.

*Tutela Legal* played a key role in the investigation and documentation of the crimes committed during the civil war that El Salvador faced between 1980 and 1992, and its files contain around 80% of the cases of serious violations of human rights during that period. Among them are the murder of Monsignor Óscar Romero and the massacre of El Mozote, for which the Inter-American Court of Human Rights sentenced the Salvadoran State in December 2012 for the perpetration of the massacre, the hiding of the truth and the denial of justice.

We worry that the decision of closing *Tutela Legal* has been taken at a time when the Supreme Court of Justice is assessing the constitutionality of the Amnesty Law of 1993. In addition, the Office of the Prosecutor has decided to investigate the violations of human rights committed during the civil war, enabling the possibility of commencing criminal proceedings against those responsible.

*Tutela Legal* is one of the historical partners of Pax Christi International. Its founding director, María Julia Hernández, belonged to the International Board of the movement in the last years of her life. She played a vital role in giving *Tutela* a professional rigor through ethics and joint commitment with the poorest and least advantaged people, who were always defended by Monsignor Romero.

We hope that the archdiocese of San Salvador will respect and carry on the legacy of Tutela, protecting and making a proper use of the files in its custody. This way, they will serve to further historical memory, and to address the thousands of victims of the conflict who are still waiting for justice to be done. This is the only way to lay the foundations of a peaceful and truly reconciled country.

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