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Bernard Hibbitts, Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

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📅 Sunday, November 02, 2008

Spain allows civil war refugee descendants to apply for citizenship under new law

Devin Montgomery at 4:51 PM ET



[JURIST] The Spanish government on Saturday **began to accept** [MOJ materials, PDF, in Spanish] applications for citizenship from descendants of those who fled the country during its **civil war** [BBC backgrounder] of the 1930s. The **law** [text] which provides for return of an estimated 500,000 expatriates and their children was passed by the **Spanish Parliament** [JURIST report] in 2007 and approved by the country's **cabinet** [official website] on Friday. Under the law, those that return will not be required to renounce their foreign citizenship. It also requires the controversial renaming of streets and public places that had commemorated dictator **Francisco Franco** [BBC backgrounder], and provides compensation for victims of his regime. AP has **more**.

Earlier this month, judge **Baltasar Garzon** [BBC backgrounder] **ordered** [JURIST report] the exhumation of 19 mass graves attributed to Franco's forces and **argued** [PDF text, in Spanish] that mass disappearances during Franco's rule constituted crimes against humanity. Garzon, widely known for his high-profile investigations of terror and human rights cases, had previously called for the **creation of a "truth commission"** [JURIST report] to uncover Franco-era abuses. In September, Garzon **began an investigation** [JURIST report] to assemble a definitive registry of the tens of thousands of victims of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime. Garzon ordered government agencies, the Spanish **Episcopal Conference** [church website], the **University of Granada** [academic website] and the mayors of four cities to produce the names of people buried in mass graves, as well as the circumstances and dates of their burial.


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