

## Mexican ex-president sued for war crimes



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MIAMI - Mexican ex-president Ernesto Zedillo has been sued in the United States by relatives of 45 indigenous people killed in Mexico's Chiapas state in 1997, plaintiffs' attorneys said in Miami Monday.

Zedillo, now a professor at Yale University in Connecticut, was sued in that northeastern US state, for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the massacre of ethnic Tzotzil Maya men, women and children in the village of Acteal, the Miami law firm Rafferty Kobert Tenenholtz Limited and Hess said.

Marc Pugliese, an attorney with the firm, told AFP the US suit was filed in Connecticut on Friday because it is where Zedillo now lives. He declined to give the names of the plaintiffs.

The case made international headlines when back on December 22, 1997, paramilitary groups trained and armed by the Mexican army slaughtered 45 villagers in Acteal. Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost state neighboring Guatemala, is heavily indigenous Maya.

The plaintiffs charge that Zedillo, who was president from 1994-2000, allegedly backed the armed forces forming the paramilitary groups. The paramilitaries were lashing back after a short-lived armed uprising in 1994 by the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), which said it was fighting for indigenous rights.

Ten per cent of Mexico's population of 103 million people are full-blooded indigenous people, official 2005 data show. Most of Mexico's population is "mestizo," with both indigenous and European roots.