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Survivors of Chilean political figure Orlando Letelier and an aide, killed in a 1976 car bombing in Washington, D.C., filed a civil suit in Federal Court Tuesday against the government of Chile, its secret police agency and nine men linked to the murder. The suit is believed to be the first ever brought against a foreign nation for a wrongful death and was brought under a new statute allowing foreign states to be sued in US courts. Plaintiffs include Letelier's widow, Isabel, and their four sons, and Michael Moffitt, husband of Ronni Moffitt, who was killed.

Letelier was an ambassador to the US and a cabinet minister under the late President Salvador Allende but became an exile and outspoken critic of the current president, Augusto Pinochet, who succeeded Allende in a 1973 coup.