

Center for Justice and Accountability

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://cja.org/former-somali-commander-and-current-virginia-resident-to-face-trial-in-virginia-for-torture-and-attempted-extrajudicial-killing-during-countrys-civil-war/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

MEDIA ADVISORY & BACKGROUND

WHEN: May 13-17, 2019, starting at 9 a.m.

WHERE: United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia

Albert V. Bryan U.S. Courthouse
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, VA 22314

MEDIA CONTACT: Lisa Cohen (310) 395-2544 lisa@lisacohen.org

BACKGROUND

On May 13, 2019, former Somali National Army commander, Colonel Yusuf Abdi Ali, (aka Tukeh), a Virginia resident, will stand trial for his alleged role in the torture and attempted extrajudicial killing of Mr. Farhan Warfaa under the brutal Siad Barre regime, the military dictatorship that ruled Somalia from 1969 to 1991. Mr. Warfaa is represented by the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) and co-counsel DLA Piper.

Mr. Warfaa was a teenager and nomadic herder when Somalia was on the brink of civil war. Early one morning, he was taken from his home, rounded up with the other men and boys from his village, and taken to the Military Headquarters of the 5th Brigade of the Somali National Army, where Col. Tukeh held command. The case alleges that Col. Tukeh's soldiers tortured and interrogated Mr. Warfaa while he was imprisoned at a military base in Northern Somalia, and that Col. Tukeh himself shot Mr. Warfaa five times at point blank range, leaving him for dead. Miraculously, he survived. Mr. Warfaa alleges that he was persecuted because he is a member of the Isaaq clan.

Col. Tukeh fled to Canada after the Barre regime was overthrown and eventually became a permanent resident of the United States where he has been living since 1996. CJA (and then pro-bono counsel Cooley LLP) filed a civil suit in 2004 before the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia against Col. Tukeh, alleging that Col. Tukeh was responsible for the torture and attempted extrajudicial killing of Mr. Warfaa under the Torture Victim Protection Act (TVPA). Fifteen years since it was first filed, Mr. Warfaa's case is now finally going to trial.

CJA's case against Col. Tukeh represents the third case brought by CJA against human rights abusers from the Barre regime.

Note about the evidence: CJA and DLA Piper will present documentary and testimonial evidence of the torture and attempted extrajudicial killing of Mr. Warfaa, including the testimony of Mr. Warfaa himself; witnesses from Somaliland; former U.S. Special Envoy to Somalia, Ambassador Robert Goss; and medical experts, Dr. Allen S. Keller and Dr. Daryn Reicherter. A jury will be asked to find Col. Tukeh legally responsible and to award compensatory and punitive damages.

Other cases against Siad Barre regime abuses: CJA's case against Colonel Tukeh is the third such case to go to trial.

Yousuf v. Samantar: On August 28, 2012, U.S. district court Judge Leonie Brinkema awarded \$21 million in compensatory and punitive damages against former Somali General Mohamed Ali Samantar, who had lived in Virginia since 1997. In a hearing before Judge Brinkema on February 23, 2012, General Samantar accepted liability and responsibility for torture, extrajudicial killing, war crimes and other human rights abuses committed against the civilian population of Somalia during the Barre regime. To learn more about this case, please visit CJA's [website](#).

Ahmed v. Magan: CJA successfully held the former investigations chief of the Somali National Security Service (NSS), Colonel Abdi Aden Magan, liable for the torture and arbitrary detention of CJA's client, Professor Abukar Ahmed, a renowned human rights activist

and law professor in Somalia. The judge ruled that Colonel Magans conduct was brutal and egregious and awarded Professor Ahmed \$5 million in compensatory damages and \$10 million in punitive damages to deter others from committing such acts and to provide redress. To learn more about this case, please visit CJAs [website](#).

About the Center for Justice and Accountability

The Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) is a San Francisco-based international human rights organization. CJAs mission is to deter torture, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other severe human rights abuses around the world through innovative litigation, policy, and transitional justice strategies. CJA partners with victims and survivors in pursuit of truth, justice, and redress. For more information, visit www.cja.org.

About DLA Piper

DLA Piper is a global law firm with lawyers located in more than 40 countries, positioning them to help clients with their legal needs around the world. DLA Piper is also deeply committed to pro bono, focusing on the rights of children, access to justice and the rule of law, and assisting asylum seekers, refugees, and stateless people. For more information, visit <https://www.dlapiper.com>.

[Media Advisory Tukeh TrialDownload](#)

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GERALD GRAY LEGACY CIRCLE

GERALD GRAY FOUNDED CJA IN 1998 AND CONTINUES
WORKING TO HELP TORTURE SURVIVORS TODAY.

Join the Gerald Gray Legacy Circle

To join, please let us know that you have included CJA in your estate plans, insurance policy, or planned giving instrument by contacting us at center4justice@cja.org. We will ensure your gift supports CJA's mission and welcome you to the Gerald Gray Legacy Circle.

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*"We will never catch all the torturers—but we will always catch some,
and none of them will ever know who is next."*