

Center for Constitutional Rights

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

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/press-center/press-releases/ruling-abu-ghraib-torture-lawsuit-headed-trial>

Campaign and Advocacy

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February 27, 2019, Alexandria, VA Today, a federal judge refused to dismiss a lawsuit filed by survivors of torture at the infamous hard site at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq against private military contractor CACI Premier Technology, Inc., over the for-profit company's role in the torture. CACI provided interrogation services at the prison. The Center for Constitutional Rights filed the case in 2008, and CACI has sought to dismiss it 16 times, resulting in multiple trips to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Leonie Brinkemas rejection of CACI's latest motions means that, nearly 15 years to the date when the world first saw the shocking photos of naked, hooded Iraqis stacked in human pyramids and subjected to horrific abuse, three of the original Abu Ghraib survivors in the case, Suhail Al Shimari, Asaad Al Zubae, and Salah Al-Ejaili, will finally be able to have their day in court. They will be permitted to testify either live or by video link, representing a rare opportunity for the American public to hear directly from victims of this historic human rights atrocity.

Trial is scheduled to begin on April 23, 2019 in the federal courthouse in Alexandria Virginia.

After the smoke from more than a decade of litigation fights has settled, we now see an important moment in the quest for justice and accountability for victims of torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib. Our clients have waited patiently for the lawyers to do their work now, they finally have a chance to tell their story directly to an American jury, said Center for Constitutional Rights Legal Director [Baher Azmy](#).

U.S. military investigators long ago concluded that CACI interrogators conspired with U.S. soldiers, who were later court-martialed, to soften up detainees for interrogations. A U.S. Army general referred to the treatment as [sadistic, blatant, and wanton](#). A number of low-level military officers were court-martialed over their roles in the abuse, but CACI has gone unpunished and continues to reap millions of dollars in government contracts.

In a 2018 ruling, [the court held](#) that the treatment alleged by the men at Abu Ghraib constituted torture, war crimes, and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, actionable under the Alien Tort Statute. The men were subjected to stress positions, isolation, sensory deprivation, beating, forced nudity, exposure to extreme temperatures, and sexual assault treatment that caused them to suffer then and continue to suffer now severe physical and mental harm.

More than ten years passed for us to reach this point and achieve justice, said plaintiff Salah Al-Ejaili. We faced a lot of obstacles along the way that we had to surpass and we stayed patient because we wanted to win our right to equality in the law.

For more information, visit [the Center for Constitutional Rights case page](#).

Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LP, and Shereef Akeel & Valentine, P.C. in Troy, Michigan, are co-counsel on the case.

The Center for Constitutional Rights works with communities under threat to fight for justice and liberation through litigation, advocacy, and strategic communications. Since 1966, the Center for Constitutional Rights has taken on oppressive systems of power, including structural racism, gender oppression, economic inequity, and governmental overreach. Learn more at ccrjustice.org.

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