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### ***Horrific Treatment of Victims Constitutes Torture and War Crimes***

*February 21, 2018, Alexandria, VA* – Today, a Virginia federal judge [ruled](#) that the treatment of three Iraqi individuals formerly detained at the infamous “hard site” at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq constitutes torture, war crimes, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, based on a thorough review of U.S. domestic and international law. The ruling also held that the men have sufficiently alleged that employees of private military contractor CACI Premier Technology conspired to commit and aided and abetted these crimes. The case,

[Al Shimari v. CACI](#)

, was filed nearly ten years ago, and CACI has repeatedly argued that, even if its employees were involved in torture and other abuse, the company is shielded from liability. Today’s 54-page ruling definitively rejected that position, as well as attempts by certain Bush-era officials to water down the prohibition against torture, and allowed the lawsuit to proceed against CACI.

“The decision is a historic judicial rebuke to the Bush administration’s torture paradigm, which had sought to evade the well-established prohibitions against torture, and is one of the clearest statements in the post-9/11 era that victims of torture and grave human rights abuses can access the courts for a remedy,” said Center for Constitutional Rights Legal Director [Baher Azmy](#).

“The court confirmed what was plain to the eye: that the horrific treatment our clients endured at Abu Ghraib was unlawful and that, in a country operating under the rule of law, those responsible can be held accountable.”

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

Today's opinion includes a detailed account of what happened to CCR's clients, Suhail Al Shimari, Asa'ad Al-Zuba'e, and Salah Al-Ejaili, including:

[being] subjected to repeated stress positions, including at least one that made [Plaintiff Al-Ejaili] vomit black liquid; sexually-related humiliation; disruptive sleeping patterns and long periods of being kept naked or without food or water; and multiple instances of being threatened with dogs...being doused with hot and cold liquids...sexual assault and threats of rape; being left in a cold shower until [Plaintiff Zuba'e] was unable to stand; dog bites and repeated beatings, including with sticks and to the genitals...at least one [stress position] that lasted an entire day and resulted in [Zuba'e] urinating and defecating on himself; and threats that his family would be brought to Abu Ghraib...systematic beatings...with a baton and rifle, [being] he was hit against the wall; [being] forced to kneel on sharp stones, causing lasting damage to [Plaintiff Al Shimari's] legs; ...being kept in a dark cell and with loud music nearby; threats of being shot... electric shocks; being dragged around the prison by a rope tied around [Al Shimari's] neck; and having fingers inserted into [Al Shimari's] rectum.

The Court concluded: "it is clear that the abuse suffered by plaintiffs was intended to inflict severe pain or suffering and rises to the level of torture."

*Al Shimari v. CACI* was filed under the [Alien Tort Statute](#) (ATS), which allows non-U.S. citizens to sue for violations of international law committed abroad that "touch and concern" the United States. The opinion concludes that the political question doctrine is inapplicable to "cognizable claims" under the ATS.

For more information, [visit CCR's case page](#) .