



## **Press Release**

### **FAMILIES OF AMERICANS KILLED AND INJURED BY IRANIAN-BACKED IRAQI TERRORISTS SUE MEDICAL COMPANIES FOR ENGAGING IN A CONTINUING BRIBERY SCHEME THAT SUPPORTS TERRORISM**

WASHINGTON (Mar. 13, 2018) – A group of American veterans and civilians, and their families, filed an amended complaint against five major pharmaceutical and medical-supply corporations in federal court yesterday, accusing the companies of knowingly or recklessly supporting an Iraqi terrorist group that attacked, killed, and wounded thousands of Americans in Iraq. As alleged in the Amended Complaint, financing of this group allegedly has come via a longstanding and continuing bribery scheme that many of the defendants have pursued for years, which was designed to keep their profits high.

The defendants being sued are the parent companies and/or subsidiaries of AstraZeneca plc (AZN), General Electric Company (GE), Johnson & Johnson (JNJ), Pfizer Inc. (PFE), and Roche Holding Ltd. (RHHBY).

The defendants are being sued under the Anti-Terrorism Act by more than 300 Americans who were attacked or who had a family member attacked by the terrorist group Jaysh al-Mahdi (also known as JAM or the Mahdi Army), including more than 50 families who lost a loved one.

Jaysh al-Mahdi is led by Muqtada al-Sadr, a notorious Iraqi cleric known for his fiery anti-American sermons and brutal attacks on Americans serving in Iraq after the fall of Saddam. As alleged in the complaint, Jaysh al-Mahdi has carried out its campaign of terror in Iraq using money and material provided directly by the defendants.

The suit follows an extensive investigation by the Washington, D.C.-based law firms of Sparacino & Andreson PLLC and Kellogg, Hansen, Todd, Figel & Frederick, PLLC.

“While Americans worked to rebuild Iraq, many were attacked by a terrorist group that we believe has been funded in part by the defendants’ corrupt sales practices,” said Josh Branson, a partner at Kellogg Hansen. “This lawsuit alleges that the defendants have aided and abetted terrorism in Iraq by paying bribes to the terrorists who ran the Iraqi Ministry of Health. We believe that those corrupt payments, including cash and free goods, provide an important source of financing for the terrorists.”

Jaysh al-Mahdi is effectively the Iraqi franchise of Hezbollah, a Lebanese terrorist organization, and serves as Iran’s terrorist proxy in Iraq. As thousands of Jaysh al-Mahdi terrorists themselves



declared, while marching under Hezbollah flags and banners: “We are Hezbollah.” The Amended Complaint alleges that Jaysh al-Mahdi’s terrorist attacks against Americans in Iraq have been planned, authorized, and sometimes conducted by Hezbollah.

“As alleged in the Amended Complaint, many of the defendants have a documented history of paying bribes that supported terrorism under Saddam,” said Ryan Sparacino, a partner at Sparacino & Andreson. “This lawsuit alleges that when Jaysh al-Mahdi seized the Iraqi Health Ministry, the defendants continued paying the same bribes many of them provided under Saddam – except in far greater amounts. It further alleges that these corruption schemes are extensive and ongoing. The lives of the families of those killed and injured have been forever changed, and the results have been devastating.”

Kellogg Hansen and Sparacino & Andreson conducted an extensive investigation before filing the Amended Complaint. The firms spent thousands of hours working on the matter and analyzing hundreds of transactions between the defendants and the Iraqi Health Ministry. For many of the survivors of these attacks and the families of those killed, much of what the investigation uncovered came as a shock.

“My hope is that we can get justice for my brother’s death and for so many others who didn’t have to die in Iraq,” said Ami Neiberger-Miller, the surviving sister of U.S. Army Specialist Christopher Neiberger, who was killed in action in Baghdad, Iraq on August 6, 2007, three days after his 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

The Amended Complaint is available at <http://www.terrorismcase.com>.

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