



Press Release

MTN GROUP LIMITED AND ZTE CORPORATION SUED FOR THEIR SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE TO TERRORISTS

WASHINGTON (June 23, 2021) – Yesterday, 53 Americans, including veterans and Gold Star family members, sued MTN Group Limited (“MTN”), a South African telecom company, and ZTE Corporation (“ZTE”), a Chinese telecom company, for allegedly supporting a campaign of terrorism in Iraq led by Hezbollah and carried out by Iran-backed terrorist cells comprised of Hezbollah, Jaysh al-Mahdi, and the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (the “IRGC”), including its subordinate international branch, the Qods Force. The Complaint was filed by Washington, D.C.-based law firm Sparacino PLLC after an extensive investigation.

In the Complaint, plaintiffs allege U.S. Anti-Terrorism Act claims against MTN and ZTE, which each did substantial business with Iranian entities that are alleged to serve as fronts for the IRGC, including the Qods Force. Plaintiffs allege MTN and ZTE knowingly or recklessly supported a terrorist campaign that attacked, killed, and wounded thousands of Americans in Iraq.

The Complaint alleges MTN and ZTE provided funds, resources, technology, and equipment, all useful for the terrorist campaign, to terrorist fronts controlled by the IRGC, including the Qods Force, such as the Ayatollah’s personal foundation, the Bonyad Mostazafan, which served to raise money and obtain weapons for the very terrorists who were murdering Americans in Iraq. The Complaint alleges MTN’s and ZTE’s payments and other acts violated U.S. law and circumvented the international sanctions regime designed to deprive terrorists targeting Americans in Iraq of money and key technology.

“Plaintiffs allege in the Complaint that while Americans were risking their lives between 2011 and 2016 to help rebuild Iraq after nearly a decade of terrorist attacks sponsored by Iran, MTN and ZTE substantially assisted the terrorists by engaging in illicit transactions with Iranian fronts that they knew, or recklessly disregarded, the terrorists used to obtain money and weapons to attack Americans in Iraq,” said Ryan Sparacino, the Managing Partner of Sparacino PLLC. “The Complaint alleges that MTN and ZTE aided and abetted terrorism in Iraq by providing the terrorists with critical funding, weapons, and/or weapons components, and in some cases active operational support.”

“As alleged, Hezbollah and its Iraqi terrorist proxies openly proclaimed their intention to kill Americans in Iraq, and the U.S. government publicly opposed transactions with the fronts that funded them,” said Mr. Sparacino.

“Consider MTN, which, as alleged in the Complaint, serves as an official joint venture partner with Iranian fronts for terrorists. After investors asked MTN about the risks of being in a joint venture with its Iranian partners, the Complaint alleges MTN ‘laughed off questions about the political risk of doing business with Iran,’ with MTN’s then-CEO chuckling to investors that ‘[MTN] hadn’t budgeted for bomb shelters or anything like that.’ If an American jury is allowed to hear evidence of what MTN has done, MTN will no longer laugh about its choice to do business in Iran.”

The filing of this Complaint follows an extensive investigation, including thousands of hours investigating the terrorist campaign in Iraq and how Hezbollah and similar terrorists funded themselves through illicit corporate deals with companies like MTN and ZTE.

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

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