

Press Release

125 GOLD STAR FAMILIES OF AMERICANS KILLED BY SUNNI TERRORIST ATTACKS IN IRAQ FILE GROUND-BREAKING LAWSUIT AGAINST IRAN FOR QASSEM SOLEIMANI'S SUCCESSFUL SCHEME TO AID AL-QAEDA-IN-IRAQ

WASHINGTON (July 7, 2021) – A lawsuit was filed today on behalf of hundreds of Americans from 125 Gold Star families against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which stands accused of supporting a campaign of terrorism in Iraq that was led by al-Qaeda and carried out by al-Qaeda-in-Iraq and Ansar al-Islam.

The lawsuit filed by 210 Americans under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act against the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for Iran's alleged material support of al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda-in-Iraq, Ansar al-Islam, and other Sunni terrorists operating in Iraq and out of safe havens inside Iran. As alleged in the Complaint, Iran provided key material support to al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda-in-Iraq, and Ansar al-Islam, including weapons, funding, and training, and Usama bin Laden himself referred to Iran as al-Qaeda's "main artery."

The plaintiffs are Americans whose loved ones were killed or severely physically injured, or who themselves were severely physically injured, in Iraq by attacks that were committed by Iran's Sunni terrorist proxies in Iraq, al-Qaeda-in-Iraq and Ansar al-Islam, and supported by Iran's long-standing ally, al-Qaeda.

The lawsuit follows an extensive investigation by the Washington, D.C.-based law firms of Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP and Sparacino PLLC.

"The lawsuit we have filed today alleges that while thousands of Americans were risking their lives to support and rebuild Iraq, Iran was fueling attacks against Americans by helping to establish the Sunni insurgency in 2003 and then offering material support to its Sunni terrorist allies in Iraq in the years that followed," said Michael Gottlieb, a partner at Willkie. "We expect the evidence to demonstrate that Iran supported Sunni terrorists targeting Americans in Iraq by providing the terrorists with every manner of material support the Iranian regime offers terrorists, including weapons, funding, training, safe haven, and key logistical support."

“The lawsuit that 125 Gold Star families filed today is the most comprehensive terrorism case ever filed against Iran concerning the Iranians’ support for anti-American Sunni terrorists in Iraq,” said Ryan Sparacino, a partner at Sparacino PLLC. “In these Gold Star families’ Complaint, the families document, chapter and verse, how Iran’s terrorist mastermind, Qassem Soleimani, midwived the Sunni insurgency in Iraq, including al-Qaeda-in-Iraq, and sustained the terrorist campaign against America until Soleimani met his own end on January 2, 2020.”

The filing of this litigation follows an extensive investigation on the matter in which hundreds of attacks in Iraq from 2001 through the present were analyzed. For many of the survivors of these attacks and the families of those killed, much of what the investigation uncovered came as a shock.

“We feel passionate about pursuing this case against Iran to bring more light to the human cost of Iran’s support for Sunni terrorism against Americans in Iraq, whether they be servicemembers or civilians,” said Robert and Sybil Martino, the parents of U.S. Marine Corps Major Michael David Martino, who was killed in an attack on his helicopter in Anbar Province, Iraq on November 2, 2005. “Therefore, after much thought, we decided to join this effort to hold Iran accountable for its support of al-Qaeda and its terrorist allies in Iraq and to document for the world the full extent of Iran’s support for Usama bin Laden, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and the other terrorists who caused so much violence in Iraq.”

On December 27, 2019, Sparacino PLLC and Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP filed a similar lawsuit against Iran on behalf of more than 100 Gold Star families for Iran’s support of Sunni terrorists in Afghanistan, including al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Collectively, across all their terrorism-related cases on behalf of American victims, Sparacino represents more than 600 Gold Star families, and more than 2,700 Americans, and Willkie represents more than 400 Gold Star families, and more than 1,600 Americans, who were seriously injured, or whose loved ones were killed or seriously injured, in terrorist attacks against Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Complaint is available at <https://terrorismcase.com/iran>

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