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Iraqis Accuse US Defense Contractor CACI of War Crimes and Torture

By Ryan Abbott

October 03, 2013

CACI agents committed war crimes, torturing and humiliating detainees, as part of a defense contract to provide linguistic services, dozens of Iraqi citizens and their families claim in Federal Court.

The surviving Iraqi detainees and representatives from the estates of the dead sued CACI Premier Technology and CACI International under the Alien Tort Claims Act and the Torture Victim Protection Act.

“Plaintiffs allege that they or their decedents were subjected to war crimes, torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in violation of the universal law of nations by defendants, who were under contract with the United States government to provide linguistic services in connection with the interrogation of said detainees,” the plaintiffs say.

The 116-page complaint relates the tales of all 56 plaintiffs, describing horrific interrogations.

“At all times relevant herein, defendants knew or should have known, that the United States intended that all interrogations of Iraqi detainees, as well as all other services provided under defendants’ contract(s) with the government, be performed in accordance with the laws and

treaties of the United States as well as international law,” the detainees say. “Such laws and treaties prohibit war crimes, torture, and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as being inconsistent with universally recognized norms under the law of nations.”

Before launching into individual claims of each plaintiff, the complaint points to a 2003 speech made by President George W. Bush in which he condemns the use of torture.

It then describes how CACI agents put a weight on one detainee’s genitals, leaving him impotent, and beat him so badly he partially lost his vision and hearing.

Another detainee says CACI interrogators gave him shots, videotaped him in the nude and forced him to listen to loud music.

Another detainee says they cut his tongue with pliers, tightly tied a thick thread around his genitals and shot blanks at him to simulate execution. They also told him his wife and children were being tortured in the next room.

A female detainee says she was dragged across the floor by her hair, forced to watch her mother being tortured and forced to watch men being sexually assaulted.

Most detainees claim they were beaten and humiliated. Many say they were doused with cold water and forced to stand in front of an air conditioner and that their families were threatened.

“CACI translators have admitted, at times under oath, to participating in interrogations where detainees were hit, kept in stress positions until they collapsed, made to do push-ups until they collapsed, kept awake for long periods, exposed to extreme temperatures and choked by the throat,” the complaint states. “CACI translators repeatedly bragged to CACI management about how rough they were towards detainees.”

The complaint accuses CACI of hiding its misconduct from the U.S. military, stating that, “at all times, CACI management had the full and unfettered ability to prevent CACI translators from abusing and torturing prisoners.”

While CACI had 3,052 employees spread out over 28 sites in Iraq in December 2003, it “made millions of dollars” by keeping its tortuous habits under wraps, according to the complaint.

The detainees say CACI destroyed evidence of torture, including video footage and photographs, allowing the company to continue making millions under its contract.

They are suing CACI for torture, conspiracy and war crimes, echoing the nearly identical 2008 case against the contractor.

The detainees want compensatory and punitive damages to be determined at trial. They are represented by Wayne Mansulla of Ashcraft Gerel.

Detainees have sued CACI in the past for alleged torture. In June 2013, a federal judge found that CACI cannot be sued for its alleged role in the torture of Abu Ghraib prisoners. The ruling relies on *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum*, a recent Supreme Court decision in which the justices effectively immunized corporations from claims under the Alien Tort Statute by foreign citizens.

