



## Press Release

### **FEDERAL APPEALS COURT HOLDS THAT ANTI-TERRORISM ACT CLAIMS AGAINST ASTRAZENECA, GENERAL ELECTRIC, JOHNSON & JOHNSON, PFIZER, AND ROCHE CAN PROCEED**

*Lawsuit alleges that to help secure lucrative Iraqi government contracts, pharmaceutical companies paid bribes that financed terrorist attacks against Americans.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (January 5, 2022) – A group of American veterans and civilians, and their families, prevailed yesterday in a highly-watched U.S. Anti-Terrorism Act appeal against five major pharmaceutical and medical-supply corporations. The federal appellate court held that the plaintiffs’ allegations—that the companies financed anti-American terrorists in Iraq—stated a claim under the U.S. Anti-Terrorism Act.

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 plaintiffs are more than 1,200 Americans, who were attacked or who had a family member attacked by the terrorist group Jaysh al-Mahdi. Among the plaintiffs are more than 180 families who lost a loved one.

“The court’s opinion confirms that our allegations that defendants aided and abetted acts of international terrorism are serious and that our clients deserve a chance to prove them in court,” said Joshua Branson, a partner at Kellogg, Hansen, Todd, Figel & Frederick, PLLC.

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 provided directly by the defendants.

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 pending complaint alleges that Jaysh al-Mahdi’s terrorist attacks against Americans in Iraq have been planned, authorized, and sometimes conducted by Hezbollah.

“Yesterday’s opinion from the D.C. Circuit brings the 1,256 Americans, and 185 Gold Star families, seeking to hold Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca, Roche, and GE Healthcare accountable one step closer to having their day in court,” said Ryan Sparacino, the managing partner of Sparacino PLLC. “For years, these Defendants have claimed that they had the interests of the Iraqi people at heart and would have never done anything so depraved as to pay off the terrorists who openly controlled the Iraqi Ministry of Health, and billions in contracts the Ministry

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controlled. Plaintiffs believe otherwise, and look forward to taking discovery from Defendants.” Mr. Sparacino continued: “Yesterday’s landmark opinion from the D.C. Circuit should also serve as a wake-up call to any corporations thinking about paying bribes to win business from the Iraqi Ministry of Health. The terrorists continue to control the Ministry, and payoffs to the Ministry continue to fund anti-American violence.”

Kellogg Hansen and Sparacino conducted an extensive investigation before filing their claims. For many of the survivors of these attacks and the families of those killed, the D.C. Circuit’s opinion brings them one step closer to obtaining a small measure of justice.

“This court win won’t bring my brother back, but it will help hold these companies accountable for their behavior. Terrorism does not happen in a vacuum. It requires money. U.S. companies should not bribe terrorists and give them the resources they need to harm and kill our troops. It is unpatriotic and morally reprehensible behavior. The ruling upholds the Anti-Terrorism Act and is a win for Gold Star families like mine and other victims of terrorism seeking to hold corporate actors accountable,” said Ami Neiberger, surviving sister of U.S. Army Specialist Christopher Neiberger, who was killed by an roadside bomb in Baghdad, Iraq in 2007 at age 22.

The D.C. Circuit’s Opinion is available online at:

[https://www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/opinions.nsf/5758882D6D6A4186852587C00054938F/\\$file/20-7077-1929043.pdf](https://www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/opinions.nsf/5758882D6D6A4186852587C00054938F/$file/20-7077-1929043.pdf)

The Amended Complaint is available at:

<https://terrorismcase.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/20200121-Third-Amended-Complaint-Filed.pdf>

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