

Victims of State-Sponsored Terrorism File Intervenor Complaint Against DOJ for Unlawful Withholding of Funds

Counterterrorism Attorney Chris Paulos says the Department of Justice's actions have exacerbated victims' trauma.

WASHINGTON, D.C., U.S.A., August 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Levin Papantonio (LP), a leading national law firm, announces the filing of an intervenor complaint on behalf of victims of state-sponsored terrorism against the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) and Attorney General Merrick Garland ([Case 1:24-cv-01865-APM](#)). The complaint alleges the unlawful withholding of funds from the United States Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund (the "Victims Fund").



Victims who have received judgments against countries for their roles in supporting terrorism claim the U.S. DOJ is fighting to prevent these victims from receiving just compensations through the US Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund.

The intervenor-plaintiffs are victims or family members of victims who suffered grievous injuries or death due to acts of state-sponsored terrorism. The complaint asserts that the DOJ has failed to direct the deposit of qualifying funds, specifically from the settlement of the case *USA v. British American Tobacco p.l.c. et al.*, into the Victims Fund as mandated by law.

About the Victims Fund

In 1996, Congress amended the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act (FSIA) to allow U.S. victims of state-sponsored terrorism to seek justice against terrorist states by suing in U.S. courts. However, collecting on these judgments proved difficult until the enactment of the United States Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Act in 2015, which established the Victims Fund to compensate eligible victims. Despite this, the DOJ has made only four distributions from the Victims Fund in nine years, with many victims, including the intervenor-plaintiffs, receiving little to no compensation.

The complaint highlights the DOJ's refusal to direct the deposit of funds obtained from the BAT Litigation into the Victims Fund, a clear violation of the Victims Act, which requires that all proceeds from qualifying cases be deposited into the Fund. These funds are essential for providing justice and recompense to victims of state-sponsored terrorism.

In July, [Chris Paulos](#), attorney at Levin Papantonio and head of the firm's counterterrorism division, together with the LP Counterterrorism Department, obtained a [final judgment of over \\$984 million](#) in a lawsuit against the Islamic Republic of Iran and several state-owned banks and military/intelligence agencies (ESTATE OF CHRISTOPHER BROOK FISHBECK, et al., Plaintiffs, v. THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, et al., Defendants 18-cv-2248 (CRC)). The case involves members of the U.S. military and U.S. contractors who were killed or injured in terrorist attacks in Iraq between 2003 and 2011.



Levin Papantonio Attorney Chris Paulos (above) said, "All these plaintiff-intervenors served and sacrificed for the United States and have fought for years to seek justice, only to have the DOJ steer funds explicitly earmarked for terror victims into its coffers."

According to Paulos, the DOJ's "illegal money grab" directly affects his clients.

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The DOJ's failure to comply with the statutory requirements of the Victims Act is a grave injustice to the victims of terrorism and their families.”

*CHRIS PAULOS, ATTORNEY,
LEVIN PAPANTONIO*

"The DOJ's failure to comply with the statutory requirements of the Victims Act is a grave injustice to the victims of terrorism and their families. These individuals have already endured unimaginable suffering, and the withholding of these funds further compounds their trauma," Paulos said.

"We are committed to holding the DOJ accountable and ensuring that our clients receive the compensation they are rightfully owed," Paulos added.

The complaint seeks declaratory and injunctive relief to compel the DOJ to deposit the withheld funds into the Victims Fund, thereby fulfilling its statutory obligations and providing much-

needed financial support to the victims and their families.

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