

# AWKO Secures \$573 Million Judgment Against Iran for U.S. Terror Victims in Landmark Case

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Washington, District of Columbia – Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz (AWKO) announced a landmark legal victory on behalf of American victims and families affected by Iranian-sponsored terrorist attacks in Iraq. On May 30, 2025, the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. awarded more than \$573 million in damages to plaintiffs injured or killed by Iranian-funded extremist groups between 2003 and 2015.

The judgment is one of the largest in recent history under the U.S. Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), a federal statute that enables American citizens to hold foreign state sponsors of terrorism accountable through civil litigation. The ruling follows extensive evidence demonstrating that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Quds Force provided advanced weaponry, training, and financial support to Iraqi militias responsible for coordinated attacks on U.S. troops and contractors.

"This judgment is a crucial step toward accountability and recognition for the immense suffering of our veterans. We remain steadfast in our mission to bring justice to every family affected by state-sponsored terrorism and are honored to represent our nation's heroes," said Caitlyn Miller.

## The Broader Context: State-Sponsored Violence in Iraq

Between 2003 and 2015, thousands of U.S. service members and civilians were injured or killed in attacks carried out by Iranian-backed proxy groups operating in Iraq. These groups utilized explosively formed penetrators (EFPs), improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and other advanced weaponry supplied directly by the IRGC and Quds Force. These weapons inflicted catastrophic injuries, including amputations, spinal trauma, traumatic brain injuries (TBI), and psychological damage such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The AWKO litigation team argued that these attacks were not random acts of wartime violence, but part of a coordinated campaign by a foreign government against American personnel.

Through expert testimony, forensic evidence, and government documentation, the firm demonstrated Iran's role in the orchestration and financing of these terror attacks.

## Inside the Case: How Justice Was Achieved

This case was brought under the Anti-Terrorism Act and the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act (FSIA), which allows U.S. citizens to sue foreign states that sponsor terrorism. Though Iran did not appear to defend itself in court, the plaintiffs were still required to meet a high evidentiary threshold to obtain a default judgment. AWKO submitted extensive evidence, including expert testimony, declassified records, and detailed personal accounts from survivors and families, to meet the evidentiary burden required for default judgment.

The plaintiffs in this phase included seven "bellwether" cases, carefully selected to represent a cross-section of the broader group of claimants. Their testimony revealed not just physical injury

and loss of life, but also the deep, ongoing emotional and financial toll these attacks have taken.

The Ripple Effects: Human Toll of Terror

The testimonies highlighted:

Loss of limbs and physical disfigurement

Long-term neurological damage and chronic pain

Suicidal ideation, depression, and complex PTSD

Grief-related illnesses in surviving parents

Economic instability from medical bills and loss of income

Emotional trauma borne by spouses and children

These accounts underscored what many military families already know: the impact of terrorism does not end on the battlefield. It ripples through homes, communities, and generations.

What Comes Next: Enforcement and Compensation

With the court's decision now entered, plaintiffs will be eligible to seek recovery through the U.S. Victims of State-Sponsored Terrorism Fund. Established by Congress, the fund provides partial compensation to victims of international terrorism using assets seized from foreign adversaries like Iran. While the fund does not guarantee full restitution, it offers critical relief to families otherwise left with little legal recourse.

This ruling also opens the door for continued litigation on behalf of additional AWKO clients whose cases are still pending. The legal precedent established strengthens future claims under the Anti-Terrorism Act and reinforces the broader legal framework for confronting state-sponsored violence.

AWKO's Broader Mission: Advocacy for Veterans

This case represents one part of AWKO's deep and ongoing commitment to serving U.S. veterans and military families. The firm also played a leading role in the national litigation against 3M over defective combat earplugs, helping secure a historic settlement on behalf of thousands of service members who experienced hearing damage, tinnitus, and other long-term auditory injuries. Whether the harm stems from negligent manufacturers or hostile foreign actors, AWKO remains dedicated to protecting those who protect our country.

AWKO encourages other veterans, contractors, and Gold Star families affected by attacks in Iraq between 2003-2011 or Afghanistan between 2001-2017 to come forward.

#### CASE INFORMATION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

JAMES SWINNEY, et al., Plaintiffs v ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, et al., Defendants

Case No. 1:20-cv-02316-ACR

Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz, PLLC is a national law firm committed to protecting the rights of individuals seriously injured by defective products, faulty medical devices, accidents, or other forms of negligence. With more than 160 years of combined legal experience, our attorneys have secured over \$10 billion in total settlements. In the past three years alone, we've achieved some of the highest individual verdicts in the country — including awards of \$110 million, \$72 million, and \$50 million. Our firm also served as lead counsel in the largest multi-district litigation in U.S. history, securing a historic \$6 billion settlement in that case alone. In 2024, the firm was nominated for the Trial Lawyer of the Year Award for their work in 3M litigation.

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