



Ex-Somali Colonel Told to Pay \$15M in Torture Case

COLUMBUS, Ohio August 20, 2013 (AP) By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

A former Somali military colonel who left the United States while facing civil allegations that he tortured a human rights advocate was ordered by a federal judge on Tuesday to pay \$15 million in damages.

Federal Judge Mark Abel awarded the compensation to Abukar Hassan Ahmed, who in a 2010 lawsuit said he endured months of torture in the 1980s during interrogations in Somalia. A judge had previously ruled that the former colonel, Abdi Aden Magan, was responsible for the torture.

Ahmed filed the lawsuit in April 2010, stating that Magan oversaw his detention and torture in Somalia in 1988. Ahmed said that three months of torture he endured make it painful for him to sit and injured his bladder to the point that he is incontinent.

Ahmed said the torture occurred when Magan served as investigations chief of the National Security Service of Somalia, a force dubbed the Black SS or the Gestapo of Somalia because of its harsh techniques used to gain confessions from detainees.

One of Ahmed's lawyers, Christina Hioureas, on Tuesday said the judge's ruling sends a message that the United States will not be a "safe harbor for those who commit human rights abuses." She said that properties owned by Magan could be seized to cover the \$15 million.

Ahmed was a professor at the Somalia International University and a lawyer defending political dissidents when he was imprisoned and tortured. Ahmed in 2010 found out Magan was living in the United States through a Google search.

Magan lived for years in Ohio. He initially fought the lawsuit, brought by the San Francisco-based Center for Justice and Accountability, but stopped participating last year and now lives in Kenya. Court documents list Magan as representing himself. An email requesting comment sent Tuesday to the address listed for Magan on the court docket was undeliverable.

Magan had argued that the lawsuit was filed in the wrong country and too long after when Ahmed says the abuse happened. He also had said he faced his own ordeal in Somalia and fled after falling out of favor with the government.

In a 2011 court filing, the U.S. Department of State said Magan shouldn't be allowed to claim immunity. A legal adviser for the department, Harold Hongju Koh, wrote that Magan had been a resident of the U.S. since 2000.

Koh said that, "taking into account the relevant principles of customary international law, and considering the overall impact of this matter on the foreign policy of the United States, the Department of State has determined that Defendant Magan does not enjoy immunity from the jurisdiction of U.S. courts."

Ahmed is now legal adviser to the president of Somalia and divides his time between London and Somalia's capital, Mogadishu.

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/somali-colonel-told-pay-15m-torture-case-20015462>