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### **SOMALI TORTURE SURVIVOR FINALLY HAS HIS DAY IN COURT**

COLUMBUS, OHIO, May 30, 2013 – Today in Columbus, Ohio, Center for Justice & Accountability (“CJA”) client, Professor Abukar Hassan Ahmed, finally shared his story in federal court; it is an all too common story of persecution and torture under the brutal Siad Barré dictatorship that once ruled Somalia. After discovering that his torturer resided in Columbus Ohio, on April 21, 2010, Professor Ahmed, a former constitutional law professor and human rights advocate in Somalia, contacted CJA and filed a case against Colonel Abdi Aden Magan for torture, cruel treatment, and arbitrary detention. Nearly 25 years after his torture, he finally had his day in court.

Colonel Magan is the former Chief of Somalia’s infamous National Security Service (“NSS”) Department of Investigation, a government agency created to suppress perceived political opposition to the Barré Regime. The NSS, under Colonel Magan, was widely known to inflict psychological terror and physical torture against political prisoners and civilians. In 1988, Professor Ahmed was arbitrarily detained by Colonel Magan’s men and kept shackled in a painful position in a squalid prison cell for nearly three months. He was then tortured, and subjected to cruel treatment on Colonel Magan’s orders by men under his command.

On November 20, 2012, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio found the former investigations chief liable for torture, cruel treatment, and arbitrary detention. Attorneys from CJA and *pro bono* co-counsel Chadbourne & Parke, LLP and Latham & Watkins, LLP presented evidence at the hearing on May 30<sup>th</sup> to assess damages.

At the hearing, Professor Ahmed told the court that he filed this case: “Not only on behalf of myself, but on behalf of all the silent victims of torture, who do not have a voice.” He later explained that, “This case will be heard in Somalia, and will tell people that no one can torture a Somali citizen. Justice has no national borders, justice is universal and a human being will be held to account anywhere he is located.”

Christina Hioureas, Senior Associate with Chadbourne & Parke’s Public International Law practice group, said, “Professor Ahmed’s case against Colonel Magan has brought to light a dark chapter of Somalia’s history; but his life story also reveals a new chapter of Somalia’s bright future. As the Legal Adviser to President of Somalia, Professor Ahmed is continuing to promote freedom and human rights, drafting the new constitution and human rights bill and training young lawyers and judges to build this emerging democracy from the ground up after the collapse of a brutal military dictatorship.”

CJA Staff Attorney Nushin Sarkarati said, “What we heard in that courtroom was the testimony of a true human rights advocate, a man who even after being tortured, refused to remain silent. He continued to teach constitutional law and human rights law in a country whose constitution was decimated by the military dictatorship. His testimony not only taught us about the brutality of the Siad Barre regime, but the relentless will of a man that believes in rule of law and justice.”

“By standing up to his torturer and bravely recounting in open court the horrors he lived through, Prof. Ahmed yet again demonstrated his undying courage,” said Katya Cronin, an associate at Latham & Watkins.

CJA is a San Francisco-based human rights organization dedicated to deterring torture and other severe human rights abuses around the world and advancing the rights of survivors to seek truth, justice and redress. CJA uses litigation to hold perpetrators individually accountable for human rights abuses, develop human rights law, and advance the rule of law in countries in transition from periods of abuse.

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For additional information about the case, please see CJA's website: [www.cja.org](http://www.cja.org).