



For Immediate Release

**SUIT BY RENOWNED SAUDI HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST DETAILS HARMS
CAUSED BY EXPORT OF U.S. CYBERSURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY AND
TRAINING TO REPRESSIVE REGIMES**

Portland, Oregon, May 9, 2023 – Yesterday, the Center for Justice & Accountability (CJA), the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), and Foley Hoag LLP filed an amended complaint with the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon on behalf of renowned Saudi human rights activist Loujain Alhathloul against three former members of the U.S. national security establishment and their former employer, DarkMatter Group, an Emirati cyber-surveillance company.

CJA Senior Staff Attorney Claret Vargas, stated: “this lawsuit shows the very real human rights violations that can occur when former U.S. intelligence and military officials sell their knowledge and services to foreign oppressive regimes, which use these tools to carry out their repressive policies.”

For the past decade, Ms. Alhathloul, a nominee for the 2019 and 2020 Nobel Peace Prize, has been a powerful advocate for women’s rights in Saudi Arabia. She was at the forefront of the public campaign advocating for women’s right to drive in Saudi Arabia and has been a vocal critic of the country’s male guardianship system.

The amended complaint alleges that DarkMatter Group, an arm of the UAE security services, recruited Defendants Baier, Adams, and Gericke, former members of the U.S. national security establishment, to target perceived dissidents as part of the UAE’s broader cooperation with Saudi Arabia. Defendants utilized U.S. cybersurveillance technology, along with their U.S. intelligence training, to assist the UAE security services’ persecution of Ms. Alhathloul, as well as that of other human rights activists, by hacking into her iPhone, surveilling her movements, and exfiltrating her confidential communications. Following the hack, Ms. Alhathloul was arbitrarily detained by the UAE’s security services and forcibly rendered to Saudi Arabia, where she was imprisoned and tortured. Today, Ms. Alhathloul is no longer in prison, but she is currently subject to a travel ban and unable to leave Saudi Arabia.

“Our sister Loujain has been through an unimaginable ordeal for her defense of women’s rights. She has been tortured and sentenced as a terrorist, kidnapped, and forcibly disappeared. All these violations have taken place with the use of spyware technologies,” said Alia Alhathloul, Loujain’s sister. “This trial is of the utmost importance to seek redress and justice, as Loujain and her activism should be celebrated – not repressed.”

“With authoritarianism encroaching around the globe, we must be more vigilant than ever in protecting human rights advocates from threats to their digital security,” said EFF Civil Liberties Director David Greene. “Companies that employ spyware on behalf of oppressive governments must be held accountable for the resulting human rights abuses.”



For more on this case, visit <https://cja.org/what-we-do/litigation/ksa/> and <https://www.eff.org/cases/alhathloul-v-darkmatter-group>.

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About the Center for Justice and Accountability

The Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) is a San Francisco-based international human rights organization dedicated to working with communities impacted by torture, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious human rights abuses to seek truth, justice, and redress using innovative litigation and transitional justice strategies. CJA has successfully brought cases against defendants such as the commander in charge of the Lutheran Church Massacre in Liberia, the military officer responsible for the assassination of Chilean activist and singer Víctor Jara, and Syria's Assad regime for its targeted killing of war correspondent Marie Colvin.

About the Electronic Frontier Foundation

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) is the leading nonprofit organization defending civil liberties in the digital world. Founded in 1990, EFF champions user privacy, free expression, and innovation through impact litigation, policy analysis, grassroots activism, and technology development. EFF's mission is to ensure that technology supports freedom, justice, and innovation for all people of the world. For more information, visit: <https://www.eff.org/>.

About Foley Hoag LLP

Foley Hoag represents public and private clients in a wide range of disputes and transactions. Founded in 1943, the firm has grown into a unique international firm that blends innovation, deep knowledge and superior legal skill. Foley Hoag is well known for its commitment to helping clients achieve their desired results across a broad spectrum of legal matters and industries. For more information visit: <https://www.foleyhoag.com/home/>.