



U.S. JURY FINDS FORMER SYRIAN OFFICIAL SAMIR ALSHEIKH GUILTY OF TORTURE

Los Angeles, California, USA, March 16, 2026 - Today, a Los Angeles jury found former Syrian Brigadier General Samir Ousman Alsheikh guilty of three counts of torture and one count of conspiracy to commit torture. Alsheikh is the highest-ranking Assad-regime official to be prosecuted in person and held accountable for his crimes.

During the historic nine-day trial, the jury heard evidence that Mr. Alsheikh was the head of Adra Prison from about 2005 to 2008, where he ordered the torture of political dissidents and other detainees while overseeing an underground “Punishment Wing”, also known as Wing 13. Mr. Alsheikh and other prison officers brutally tortured detainees, including by beating them with batons and braided cables, strapping them to a device known as the “magic carpet”, and suspending them from ceiling pipes. The jury of 12 unanimously found Mr. Alsheikh guilty of torture and conspiracy to commit torture. Judge Hernán Vera who presided over the trial, will determine Mr. Alsheikh’s sentence at a hearing later this year. Mr. Alsheikh can appeal the verdict.

“Alsheikh’s conviction represents a critical milestone toward justice for us and other victims, and it is a pivotal moment for all those who have suffered within the Assad regime’s prison system,” said Khaled Abdul Malek, Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) client and former Adra detainee who was tortured by Alsheikh. Nidal Shikhani, another CJA client who testified at trial about the abuses he suffered at Adra, said “For survivors like me, being heard in a court of law is not only about the past, it is also about dignity. It is about affirming that even after many years, the truth still matters and the suffering of victims cannot be ignored. Today represents the beginning of a broader accountability process, not the end.” CJA represents nine victims and witnesses in the case against Mr. Alsheikh, three of whom testified at trial.

Mr. Alsheikh was convicted under the extraterritorial Torture Act, which allow the U.S. government to arrest and prosecute individuals found within the United States for acts of torture committed abroad. This trial drew significant attention from human rights advocates, legal experts and Syrian civil society organizations as Mr. Alsheikh was the highest-ranking Assad regime official to be tried in person anywhere in the world, and only the fifth person tried since the Torture Act’s enactment in 1994. “At a time when human rights protections are under threat, this case is evidence that the U.S. legal system can offer a meaningful venue for accountability — that our institutions are still capable of delivering justice for survivors of atrocities.” said Ahmad Soliman, CJA staff attorney.



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Bringing Human Rights Abusers to Justice.

About the Center for Justice & Accountability

[The Center for Justice and Accountability](#) (CJA) is a United States-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.

More Information

To learn more about CJA's work on accountability for crimes in Syria, please see [here](#).

Answers to frequently asked questions regarding the Alsheikh trial can be found [here](#).

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