



For Immediate Release

## **Historic Torture Case Against Former Senior Iranian Official Parviz Sabeti Moves Forward in U.S. Federal Court**

*Court ruling clears major hurdle for Iranian torture survivors seeking accountability.*

**ORLANDO, Florida, October 7, 2026** — The U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida has rejected former senior SAVAK official Parviz Sabeti's request to dismiss the case against him on statute of limitations grounds, in a landmark torture lawsuit, allowing the case to move forward on its merits.

The lawsuit, *[Doe I v. Sabeti](#)*, was filed under the Torture Victim Protection Act (TVPA) by three Iranian torture survivors, who are proceeding under "John Doe" pseudonyms to protect their safety. The plaintiffs allege that during the 1970s, they were detained and tortured under a system of political repression designed, authorized, and overseen by Sabeti in his role as Deputy Director of SAVAK, the Shah-era intelligence service, and head of SAVAK's internal security division and of the *Komiteh Moshtarak* or the Joint Anti-Sabotage Committee. The plaintiffs are represented by Foley Hoag LLP and the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA).

Sabeti had asked the court to dismiss the case, arguing that the plaintiffs had failed to file their complaint within the ten-year deadline in the Torture Victim Protection Act. Plaintiffs argued that because they legitimately feared for their safety and Sabeti hid his location and whereabouts until 2023, the TVPA time limit should be extended.

"While the court's full order is sealed, the decision to allow the case to move forward recognizes a fundamental principle: perpetrators of torture should not escape accountability simply because survivors were forced to live for decades with fear and an inability to safely reach the person responsible," said Claret Vargas, Senior Staff Attorney at CJA and counsel for the plaintiffs. "Our clients have carried these consequences for more than 50 years. Today, they move one significant step closer to justice."

The ruling overcomes a critical legal barrier and sets an important precedent for victims of political repression across different eras of Iranian history—both under the Shah and under the current Islamic Republic.

"Torture is a crime, whether committed under the Shah or under the Islamic Republic," added Foley Hoag partner Andrew Loewenstein. "Accountability cannot be selective. For survivors of abuses being committed in Iran today, this case sends a powerful message: justice is possible, even when it may seem out of reach."

Christina Hioureas, Chair of Foley Hoag's United Nations Practice Group, added, "The allegations in this case deserve to be heard. We are now one step closer to putting the evidence of torture before the court in our clients' longstanding efforts to seek accountability for the atrocities committed against them."



The decision comes at a time when Iranians inside the country and abroad have been grappling with issues related to transitional justice, accountability, and how to reckon with decades of state violence and human rights abuses.

Read answers to frequently asked questions [here](#).

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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 Foley Hoag LLP**

Foley Hoag is recognized for having one of the world's most experienced International Litigation and Arbitration practices, with a deep commitment to international human rights. The firm's human rights accountability work includes representing The Gambia in its Genocide Convention case against Myanmar concerning the Rohingya at the International Court of Justice, representing Afghan human rights defenders in accountability efforts with respect to the Taliban regime, acting for developing States in the climate change advisory opinion proceedings before the ICJ and ITLOS, litigating on behalf of victims under the Alien Tort Statute and Torture Victim Protection Act, and advising sovereign States, nongovernmental organizations, and others through its United Nations practice group. Foley Hoag is a longtime *pro bono* partner of the Center for Justice and Accountability, serving as co-counsel in several CJA cases, and was honored with CJA's 2024 Partner in Justice Award for excellence in the field of international human rights. For more information visit: <https://www.foleyhoag.com/home/>.