

Brale Secures Justice for Tortured Gulf War Heroes

Written by Alexandra Krasov

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Washington, D.C. – Today, Americans and Gulf War veterans who were tortured and held as human shields and prisoners of war in Iraq under the Saddam Hussein regime will finally get justice thanks to the efforts of Congressman Bruce Braley (*IA-01*) and the U.S. and Iraqi governments. The Iraqi government took the final step in resolving these claims by officially transferring the compensation funds to the U.S. government. The U.S. government will now use these funds to compensate the hundreds of American veterans and individuals who suffered under the Saddam Hussein regime. Following the State Department's announcement late last night, Rep. Braley released the following statement:

"I've worked for more than three years to make sure that these brave men and women get justice – and they've been waiting much longer than that. When our citizens are captured and tortured as prisoners of war, they deserve justice, period. This is not just to address the unimaginable wrongs that a few incredible individuals faced, but to send a clear message to the rest of the world: you will be held accountable for torturing Americans – because what happened to these individuals should never happen again.

"From the moment I heard about this case, to today's announcement that the Iraqi government has settled these claims, I've stood by these brave individuals and their right to be compensated for the horrible injustices they suffered. I believe every American should feel confident that their government will stand by them and protect them if they are tortured or wronged by any other government in the world. And each of us should feel that the United States will uphold the principles of the Third Geneva Convention, which expressly forbids action by our country to absolve another country from liability for torturing prisoners of war. This is a very important victory for these men and women and for every American who believes in justice."

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In 2002, a group of American ex-prisoners of war who were brutally tortured in Iraq during the first Persian Gulf War sued Saddam Hussein's regime and eventually won a judgment against Hussein. But shortly after the invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration stepped in and had the judgment overturned.

Rep. Braley then acted in Congress and passed the Justice for Victims of Torture and Terrorism Act – which restored a provision in the Defense Authorization Act to ensure that the Iraqi government finally satisfies outstanding judgments and claims by American victims of Iraqi torture and terrorism. Rep. Braley's bill also ensured that if American citizens are ever tortured by foreign governments, they can get justice and be properly compensated for their injuries.

Last night, the U.S. State Department issued a statement on the settlement noting that, "Congressman Bruce Braley's unwavering support of the administration's efforts to achieve resolution of the claims was instrumental throughout the process leading up to the conclusion of the agreement and beyond."

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