



First Guantanamo Detainee Tried in Federal Court Sentenced to Life

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WASHINGTON - The Constitution Project (TCP) issued a statement in reaction to the life sentence handed down to Ahmed Ghailani, the first Guantanamo detainee to be tried in our traditional criminal justice system.

According to TCP Policy Counsel Mason C. Clutter, "The sentencing of Ahmed Ghailani yet again demonstrates the ability of our traditional criminal courts to handle complex terrorism cases. Mr. Ghailani's sentence was imposed after a full trial that was consistent with our Constitution and the rule of law. Mr. Ghailani will serve life in prison and is not eligible for parole in the federal system. We are pleased to see that he is being held accountable for the 1998 Embassy bombings.

Ms. Clutter went on to note, "The Ghailani case proves that justice for acts of terrorism can be achieved in our civilian justice system. Mr. Ghailani joins a group of over 400 terrorism suspects who have been tried in our traditional federal courts, compared to only five detainees who have faced trial in the military commissions system. While Mr. Ghailani will likely challenge his conviction, the legitimacy of the charges he faced in civilian court will not be at issue, unlike the challenges that could have been brought had he been tried by military commission. The President should use all available resources to transfer the remaining Guantanamo detainees to the United States to face trial in our proven criminal justice system."

Established in 1997, The Constitution Project (TCP) is known for its ability to bring together unlikely allies-experts and practitioners from across the political spectrum-in order to promote and safeguard America's founding charter. TCP is working to reform the nation's broken criminal justice system and to strengthen the rule of law by undertaking scholarship, advocacy, policy reform, and public education initiatives. TCP was born out of the belief that we must cast aside the labels that divide us, in order to keep our Constitution and our democracy strong.