

THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT



Safeguarding Liberty, Justice & the Rule of Law

Ghailani Trial Proves Federal Courts Equipped to Handle Terrorism Trials

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 17, 2010

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WASHINGTON – Today, a jury in New York City convicted former Guantanamo detainee Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani of conspiracy, which carries a 20 years to life sentence, for his participation in the 1998 bombings of two United States Embassies in East Africa. After nearly six years of detention, Mr. Ghailani became the first Guantanamo detainee to be convicted in a federal criminal court.

The following may be attributed to Mason C. Clutter- Counsel, The Constitution Project:

“Justice has been done. The Ghailani trial demonstrates that our traditional federal criminal courts can handle complicated terrorism cases, while upholding our Constitution and the rule of law. The trial took place in downtown NYC without security problems and proceeded more rapidly than was anticipated. Clearly, concerns about security, extreme costs and delay proved to be red herrings. TCP encourages Attorney General Holder to now stand behind his original decision to try Guantanamo detainees, including the 9/11 defendants, in our civilian justice system.”

For over a year, a group of nearly 140 prominent Americans from across the political spectrum have been promoting the responsible closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Last November, TCP facilitated an effort to gather signatories to [*Beyond Guantanamo: A Bipartisan Declaration*](#). Declaration signatories include former federal prosecutors, judges, military leaders, administration officials, Members of Congress, intelligence experts, and family members of terrorism victims.

The Declaration promotes the use of America’s traditional civilian criminal courts and opposes the use of indefinite detention without charge. The list of prominent signatories includes former FBI Director William S. Sessions, Ambassador Thomas Pickering, and General Charles Krulak. Ms. Clutter and some of the Signatories are available for

commentary.

The Constitution Project (TCP) is a national, bipartisan think tank that develops consensus-based solutions to some of the most difficult constitutional challenges of our time. Established in 1997, TCP is renowned 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 works on criminal justice and rule of law issues by undertaking scholarship, policy reform and public education initiatives.

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