



The Promise Institute for Human Rights

UCLA School of Law

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**Petitioners for Mirmehdi et al. v. USA Present Case Before Inter-American Commission
on Human Rights**

NOVEMBER 9, 2023, WASHINGTON, D.C. — Yesterday the four Mirmehdi brothers, pro-democracy activists from Iran who were wrongly and arbitrarily detained by the U.S. government for 41 months after 9/11, presented their case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). The brothers petitioned the IACHR with counsel from the Human Rights Litigation Clinic at the UCLA School of Law and Schonbrun Seplow Harris Hoffman & Zeldes LLP.

Mostafa Seyed Mirmehdi, Mohsen Seyed Mirmehdi, Mojtaba Seyed Mirmehdi, and Mohammad-Reza Mirmehdi fled to the United States from Iran because of the persecution they faced there for their pro-democracy beliefs. In October 2001, however, United States officials detained the brothers and revoked their immigration bond based on false evidence regarding their attendance at a rally advocating for democracy in Iran. The brothers were part of a group of more than 750 non-citizen detainees caught up in post 9/11 discriminatory raids.

During their detention, the Mirmehdi brothers were subjected to humiliation, extreme physical abuse, and degrading treatment, in violation of both nationally and internationally recognized rights.

When they were released from detention, they sued over the violations of their rights. After the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that immigrants cannot sue about wrongful detention, the brothers sought justice at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Their hearing focused on the false evidence used to detain them, the violations of their civil liberties, and the considerable damage to their reputations, personal lives, and health, which were a direct result of their prolonged and arbitrary detention. The brothers asked the Commissioners to recommend that the United States government

grant them reparations, issue a formal apology, and implement policy changes to ensure these harms do not happen again.

The case is part of an ongoing and intensifying pattern by the United States to restrict immigrants' ability to enforce their rights in U.S. courts and to create impunity for federal government officials and bodies who violate individuals' rights. The United States' refusal to remedy the brothers' claims is also part of a pattern of denying justice to individuals harmed by the United States's post-9/11 rights abuses.

At the hearing, attorney Tessa Baizer of the UCLA Human Rights Litigation Clinic noted that this was the first time in over fifteen years of litigation that the brothers were able to be heard on the merits of their claims and ask for a remedy for their wrongful detention.

The Commissioners asked the United States to respond to several questions, including why the brothers were detained after September 2001 even though they had been released on bond during a 1999 proceeding. They also asked the United States to clarify whether the brothers received due process in their immigration proceedings, given the false evidence used against the brothers. The United States will have 30 days to respond to those questions.

Ms. Baizer stated, "While nothing can compensate the brothers for what they experienced at the hands of the U.S. government, we are encouraged that the IACHR took the brothers' case and remain hopeful that justice may yet be done."

"We feel strongly that what happened to us should not happen to others. We hope our efforts for accountability help other immigrants who, like us, come to America in search of a place where freedom of speech and thought is respected." said Mohsen Mirmehdi.

His brother Mostafa Mirmehdi, who also testified at the hearing, stated, "We were greatly harmed by being detained for 41 months and by having our reputations destroyed on the basis of false evidence. We hope the international legal system will finally recognize this wrong that was done to us."

More information on the brothers' case, including court documents, is available on the [Case Page](#).

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