

Victims of UTA Flight 772 Issue Open Letter To Capitol Hill On "Libyan Claims Resolution" Bill

Washington, D.C. – July 31, 2008: The law firm Crowell & Moring LLP has released the following open letter on behalf of its clients, the families of the victims of UTA Flight 772 suitcase bombing in September 1989:

We are the American families whose loved ones were murdered by Libya in September 1989 when Libyan agents placed a suitcase bomb on board UTA Flight 772 which blew up over the African desert on its way to Paris, killing all 170 innocent people on board. We speak out today to oppose passage of the "Libyan Claims Resolution" Bill pending before the House of Representatives.

Over seven years ago we filed a lawsuit under U.S. law to hold Libya accountable for this act of murder and aircraft sabotage, and to obtain a judicial award for fair compensation. Libya and its lawyers have vigorously defended the case from the beginning, and this past January 2008 the federal court in Washington, D.C. issued a judgment against the Libyan State, the only federal court judgment to be awarded against Libya in such cases. That court judgment made detailed findings of Libya's direct responsibility for this terrorist attack, based on extensive evidence presented by our counsel and experts, and made detailed findings of fair compensation for the 51 American plaintiffs in the case, all consistent with U.S. law and other similar federal court judgments.

The "Libyan Claims Resolution" Bill pending before the House of Representatives will, if approved, violate the intent of Congress which, since 1996, has allowed us and others to take our case to Court against Libya, seek a judicial finding of responsibility, and obtain a legal award of fair compensation. Under U.S. law, it has been our Nation's policy to make Libya's state-sponsorship of terrorism very expensive so that it and other states, such as Iran, will think twice before they start killing innocent American civilians.

We, of course, support those who already have settled their claims against Libya and hope they achieve a full measure of justice -- but any settlements by other victims should not be at the expense of those who have fought and won in the courts. The courts have decided that Libya carried out the UTA 772 attack, and has awarded us compensation under the rule of law. This Bill will invalidate the court's judgment, and allow Libya to avoid a court judgment. This simply cannot be what Congress intends. We are optimistic that Congress will work with all U.S. victims of Libyan terrorism to enforce U.S. court judgments on their behalf.

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