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In Advance of Court Battle Over State Secrets, Experts Discuss the Government's Growing Use of Secrecy to Avoid Accountability

D.C. Circuit to Hear Case of National Security Whistleblower Sibel Edmonds on April 21

Washington, DC—As a preview to the appellate argument in Sibel Edmonds' case, secrecy and legal experts will hold a press briefing on Wednesday, April 20th to address the far-reaching impact of Edmonds' case and the disturbing trend of excessive government secrecy aimed at avoiding accountability.

Edmonds, a former Middle Eastern language specialist hired by the FBI shortly after 9/11, was fired in 2002 after repeatedly reporting serious security breaches and misconduct. Edmonds challenged her retaliatory dismissal by filing a lawsuit in federal court, but her case was dismissed last July after Attorney General John Ashcroft invoked the so-called "state secrets privilege," and retroactively classified briefings to Congress related to her case.

The government has argued that every aspect of Edmonds' case involves state secrets--including where she was born and what languages she speaks--and therefore cannot go forward. Edmonds is appealing to the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit to reinstate her case. Several 9/11 family member advocacy groups filed a friend-of-the-court brief in her support. Ann Beeson, Associate Legal Director of the ACLU National Office, will argue on behalf of Edmonds. Oral arguments will be heard on April 21.

Wednesday, April 20th –Briefing with Lawyers and Experts on Secrecy and Government Accountability

- Steven Aftergood, Director of the Project on Government Secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists
- Barbara Olshansky, Center for Constitutional Rights, Counsel to Maher Arar
- Sibel Edmonds, National Security Whistleblower
- Ann Beeson, Edmonds' attorney, Associate Legal Director of the ACLU National Office
- Danielle Bryan, Executive Director, Project on Government Oversight

When: 10 AM

Where: Washington Court Hotel, Hermitage Room, 525 New Jersey Avenue, NW

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Thursday, April 21st – D.C. Circuit Court of Appeal Hearing

When: 9:30 AM

Where: E. Barrett Prettyman United States Courthouse
Court of Appeals Courtroom, 333 Constitution Avenue, N.W., 5th Floor

Immediately Following Hearing – Comments on Courthouse Steps

- Ann Beeson, Edmonds' attorney, Associate Legal Director of the ACLU National Office
- Sibel Edmonds, National Security Whistleblower
- 9/11 Family Members
- National Security Whistleblowers

Where: Courthouse Steps
E. Barrett Prettyman United States Courthouse
Court of Appeals Courtroom, 333 Constitution Avenue, N.W., 5th Floor

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