

Supreme Court holds U.S. rights legacy in the balance

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(CNN) -- An argument before the Supreme Court on October 1 in *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum* will have enormous significance. The case concerns the torture of Ogoni leaders in Nigeria, but at stake is the future of the law under which this case was brought, the Alien Tort Statute.

The United States stands at a crossroads. At its best, our nation has played a crucial role in championing human rights throughout the world and pioneering human rights law. At its worst, it has abandoned its lofty ideals in the name of realpolitik and [supported dictators and policies](#) that were responsible for horrible abuses.

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/27/opinion/warren-supreme-court-alien-tort-law/index.html>