

Ohio Man Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to Somali-Based Terror Group

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Minnesota

February 06, 2012

(612) 664-5600

<http://www.fbi.gov/minneapolis/press-releases/2012/ohio-man-pleads-guilty-to-conspiracy-to-provide-material-support-to-somali-based-terror-group>

MINNEAPOLIS—Earlier today in federal court, a 27-year-old man from Westerville, Ohio pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide money and personnel to al Shabaab, a designated foreign terrorist organization based in Somalia. Ahmed Hussein Mahamud, formerly of Eden Prairie, Minn., pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization. Mahamud, who was indicted on June 7, 2011, entered his plea before U.S. District Court Chief Judge Michael J. Davis.

In his plea agreement, Mahamud admitted that from 2008 through February 2011, he conspired with others to provide money and people to al Shabaab, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, in its fight against the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) and the Ethiopian military, which supports the TFG.

The defendant also admitted that he and his co-conspirators raised money from the Somali-American community in Minnesota under false pretenses to pay for men in Minnesota to travel to Somalia to join al Shabaab. Specifically, the defendant and his co-conspirators claimed the money raised would be used for a local mosque or to help orphans in Somalia. In fact, the money collected was used to purchase airline tickets and to pay other expenses so men could travel from Minnesota to Somalia to join al Shabaab.

Further, Mahamud admittedly sent money via wire transfers to a co-conspirator in Somalia, knowing the money would be used to purchase weapons or otherwise support al Shabaab.

Court documents indicate that since September 2007, approximately 20 young men have left the Minneapolis area for Somalia, where they have trained with al Shabaab. The charges against Mahamud stem from an ongoing, three-year investigation into that activity. To date, 18 people have been charged in the District of Minnesota in unsealed indictments or criminal complaints. Eight of those individuals have been arrested in the United States or overseas; of these eight, seven have pleaded guilty to related charges. Of the remaining 10 defendants, eight are at large and believed to be abroad, while two others are believed to have died in Somalia.

The charge levied against Mahamud carries a potential maximum sentence of 15 years in federal prison. A federal judge will determine the actual sentence at a hearing not yet scheduled.

This case was investigated by the FBI's Minneapolis Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), with assistance from the FBI's JTTF in Columbus, Ohio. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Charles J. Kovats, Jr. and John Docherty and Trial Attorney William M. Narus of the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division.