

Columbus, Ohio Man Charged with Providing Material Support to Terrorists

U.S. Department of Justice

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WASHINGTON—A federal grand jury has charged Abdirahman Sheik Mohamud, 23, of Columbus, Ohio, with one count of attempting to provide and providing material support to terrorists, one count of attempting to provide and providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, and one count of making false statements to the FBI in an indictment returned in the Southern District of Ohio.

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, U.S. Attorney Carter M. Stewart of the Southern District of Ohio and Special Agent in Charge Angela L. Byers of the FBI's Cincinnati Division announced the indictment returned today.

According to court documents, Mohamud left the United States in April 2014 for the purpose of training and fighting with terrorists in Syria.

As a naturalized citizen of the United States, he obtained a U.S. passport and purchased a one-way ticket to Greece. He did not board his connecting flight to Athens, Greece, during his layover in Istanbul, Turkey, and instead completed pre-arranged plans to travel to Syria.

According to the indictment, Mohamud stated that, after arriving in Syria, he obtained training from a group in shooting weapons, breaking into houses, explosives and hand-to-hand combat. Mohamed also stated that, after completing this training, he was instructed by a cleric in the organization to return to the United States and commit an act of terrorism.

“According to the charges in the indictment, Mohamud allegedly traveled to Syria to train with and fight alongside terrorists” said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. “Identifying and neutralizing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters who return to the United States is one of the National Security Division’s highest priorities. I want to thank the many agents, analysts, and prosecutors who are responsible for this ongoing investigation and today’s charges.”

“Mohamud sought and obtained terrorist training in Syria,” said U.S. Attorney Stewart. “Upon his return to the United States, he discussed carrying out acts in the United States.”

“The Joint Terrorism Task Force and our law enforcement partners work tirelessly to protect our community,” said Special Agent in Charge Byers. “Cases like this are tangible reminders of the threats we face each day.”

Providing material support to terrorists and providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization—in this case, namely, Jabhat al-Nusrah—are each crimes punishable by up to 15 years in prison. Making false statements involving international terrorism carries a maximum sentence of eight years in prison.

Mohamud is scheduled to be transferred into federal custody based on today's indictment. He was arrested and detained on state charges on Feb. 21, 2015.

Assistant Attorney General Carlin and U.S. Attorney Stewart commended the JTTF for its work on this investigation, and also thanked Franklin County Prosecutor Ron O'Brien and his office for their ongoing efforts in this investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Doug Squires, Dana Peters and Salvador Dominguez of the Southern District of Ohio, Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Gibson with the Franklin County Prosecutor's office, and Trial Attorney Bridget Behling of the Justice Department's National Security Division.

An indictment merely contains allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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