

Somalian Sentenced to Federal Prison For Making False Statements During a Terrorism Investigation

U.S. Attorney's Office Western District of Texas (210) 384-7100

July 25, 2013

<http://www.fbi.gov/sanantonio/press-releases/2013/somalian-sentenced-to-federal-prison-for-making-false-statements-during-a-terrorism-investigation>

In San Antonio this morning, 29-year-old Abdullahi Omar Fidse, a citizen of Somalia, was sentenced to eight years in federal prison after admitting to making false statements under penalty of perjury during a terrorism investigation announced United States Attorney Robert Pitman, Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent In Charge Armando Fernandez, San Antonio Division and Acting Special Agent in Charge Vincent Igljo, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in San Antonio.

In addition, United States Chief District Judge Fred Biery ordered that Fidse be placed under supervised release for a period of three years after completing his prison term.

"This prosecution demonstrates the vigilance of the federal government in detecting and disabling individuals who seek to enter the country illegally with the purpose of doing harm. We will continue to be aggressive in protecting our borders and seeking severe punishment for those who violate our laws," stated U.S. Attorney Robert Pitman.

According to court records, on June 24, 2008, Fidse and 25-year-old Deka Abdalla Sheikh, who was serving as Fidse's English interpreter, arrived at the Hidalgo, TX, Port of Entry without any identification and claimed asylum based upon Fidse's father being murdered by "al-Qaida" in the father's store in Mogadishu, Somalia, while in the presence of Fidse. Fidse was placed in an Immigration Detention Facility located in Pearsall, Texas, while his asylum claim was investigated.

Recorded conversations between Fidse and Sheikh during Fidse's detention revealed that prior to arriving in Hidalgo, the defendants admittedly planned to provide false testimony to authorities about how they first met, that they were married and that they had lived together for three years. Furthermore, they discussed hand signals to be used to communicate during hearings in an effort to ensure that their individual testimony would match.

Fidse's stories changed over the course of his detention, including who was responsible for his father's death. Fidse initially told Customs and Border Protection officers that al-Qaida killed his father while they lived in Somalia. He subsequently told an Immigration Court judge that the Islamic Courts were responsible for his father's death. In truth, his father had died of natural causes years before and Fidse actually had lived in Kenya since he was in grade school. Because of Fidse's credibility and his inability to get his story straight on who killed his father, on March 31, 2009, the Immigration Court denied Fidse's asylum request. He remained in the detention facility since he is a Somali national and travel documents could not be obtained from that country.

The previously mentioned recordings also revealed discussions Fidse had with an undercover source in which Fidse professed his support for violent, radical Jihad; the killing of non-Muslims; and, his adoration for Osama Bin Laden. While still in custody, Fidse also made recorded comments that he purchased an armed vehicle and weapons to be used by terrorists. Fidse told an undercover source how he bought a vehicle and armed it for an al-Shabaab squad and that the vehicle was ultimately destroyed while fighting the Ethiopian defense forces supporting the Somalia Transitional Government. Fidse also told the undercover source that, "We are terrorists."

Fidse initially denied making the recorded statements when interviewed by federal investigators and furthermore, refused to provide them with more specifics about the armed vehicle. However, on December 5, 2012, Fidse pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to obstruct an immigration proceeding and one count of conspiracy to make a false statement during a terrorism investigation. Today, Fidse received four years' imprisonment for each count to run consecutively. On September 20, 2012, Sheikh

pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to make a false statement in a terrorism investigation. By pleading guilty, Sheikh admitted that she and Fidsa conspired to provide false information to authorities to gain entrance into the United States as well as provide false information to authorities concerning support for terrorist organizations. Yesterday, Judge Biery sentenced her to five years' probation.

"This case demonstrates the Joint Terrorism Task Force's commitment to protecting the U.S. from individuals who seek to do us harm by gaining entry to the U.S. through deception, manipulation and violation of the law," stated FBI Special Agent in Charge Armando Fernandez.

"Homeland Security Investigations' (HSI) unique law enforcement authorities provide the tools essential to investigating a wide variety of criminal violations and immigration offenses. These authorities proved to be a critical advantage in building a case against Abdullahi Omar Fidsa," said HSI Acting Special Agent in Charge Vincent Iglia. "HSI will continue to use its vast investigative enforcement authorities to help prosecute those who threaten our national security or provide support to those who intend to do harm against our citizens."

This case was investigated by agents with the Joint Terrorism Task Force, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), U.S. Border Patrol, and the Department of Homeland Security Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) and Detention and Removal Operations (DRO). Assistant United States Attorney Mark Roomberg prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.