

## Department of Justice Press Release

### For Immediate Release

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United States Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Missouri

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### **Eight Area Men Sentenced on Federal Racketeering Charges Involving Conspiracy to Transfer Cash and Checks to the Palestinian Territories**

ST. LOUIS, MO—The United States Attorney's office announced today that eight members of a criminal enterprise operating out of five St. Louis area convenience stores have been sentenced on charges of federal racketeering or related charges.

As far back as 2000, the RICO conspiracy has involved bank fraud, receipt of stolen property, conducting an unlicensed money transmitting business, purchasing contraband cigarettes for resale, evading reporting requirement on exporting monetary instruments, and transporting monetary instruments and funds to avoid reporting requirements.

According to plea agreements, the Hamed Organization was a criminal enterprise that operated primarily in the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County. Members and associates of the enterprise, many who are related to each other, raise money through legal and illegal means for themselves and to transfer money to entities in the Palestinian territories.

The convenience stores were utilized to receive and sell stolen goods such as infant formula, computers, Global Positioning System devices, and cigarettes. The enterprise bought the stolen property at rates significantly below fair market retail value and sold the items through the convenience stores at a large profit.

The criminal enterprise operated out of the following area convenience stores:

Regal Food I, 4201 McRee Avenue, St. Louis; Regal Food II, 3852 Virginia Avenue, St. Louis; Ferguson Market, 9101 West Florissant Avenue, Ferguson; Prince Market, 9826 St. Charles Rock Road, St. Louis; and St. Louis Supermarket, 4331 Natural Bridge Avenue, St. Louis.

Ghandi Hisham Hamed, 32, Florissant, MO, leader of the enterprise and brother of Bassam Hamed, was sentenced today to four years of probation and fined \$5000 for racketeering;

Nael Abdeljabbar, 49, Florissant, MO, was also sentenced on March 9 to three years of probation and fined \$5000 for racketeering.

Bassam Hisham Hamed, 34; Florissant, MO, chief executive of the enterprise, was sentenced March 4 to three years of probation for conspiracy to structure the exportation of monetary instruments to avoid reporting requirements;

Ayoub Hisham Hamed, 28; Hazelwood, MO, brother of Bassam Hamed, was sentenced to two years of probation on March 4, for conspiracy to structure the exportation of monetary instruments to avoid reporting requirements;

Said Jarabaa, 36, Florissant, MO, leader of the enterprise, was sentenced to six months work release on March 4 for racketeering;

Suhail Jarabaa, 29, Florissant, MO, brother of Said Jarabaa, was sentenced to three years of probation March 15, for conspiracy to structure the exportation of monetary instruments to avoid

reporting requirements;

Mohammed Badwan, 35, Florissant, MO, brother of Mazen, was sentenced to six months of house arrest, three years of probation, and a \$5000 fine on March 15, for racketeering; and

Mazen Badwan, 37, Florissant, MO, brother of Mohammed, was sentenced to time served on March 2, for racketeering.

All eight defendants appeared before United States District Judge Charles A. Shaw.

This case was investigated by the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. Assistant United States Attorneys John J. Ware, Matthew Drake and Steven Holtshouser handled the case for the U.S. Attorney's office.