



THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TUESDAY, MAY 29, 2018

**UNITED STATES CITIZEN SENTENCED TO 35 YEARS FOR PROVIDING MATERIAL SUPPORT TO AL-SHABAAB**

WASHINGTON – Maalik Alim Jones, 33, of Baltimore, Maryland, was sentenced today to 35 years in prison, to be followed by five years of supervised release, for conspiring to provide material support to al-Shabaab, a designated foreign terrorist organization based in Somalia, conspiring to receive military training from al-Shabaab, and carrying and using an AK-47 machinegun, rocket-propelled grenades, and other destructive devices in furtherance of his support for al-Shabaab. Jones pleaded guilty on Sept. 8, 2017, to a three-count Superseding Information.

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers and U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman for the Southern District of New York made the announcement. U.S. District Judge Paul G. Gardephe imposed Jones’s sentence.

“U.S. citizens who travel overseas to fight with a terrorist organization – which is what Jones did – betray our country and pose a serious threat to our national security,” said Assistant Attorney General Demers. “The National Security Division remains committed to identifying and stopping terrorists like Jones, and we will hold them accountable. Credit goes to all those who worked so tirelessly to bring Jones to justice.”

“We may never know what drove Maalik Jones to travel to Somalia and pledge allegiance to al Shabaab, a terrorist organization that has vowed to destroy America,” said U.S. Attorney Berman. “But we do know that with today’s sentence, Jones is no longer a threat to America’s ideals.”

According to the Complaint, the Indictment, the Superseding Information, and statements made in court proceedings, including at sentencing:

In July 2011, Jones left Baltimore to join al-Shabaab in Somalia. Jones traveled to New York City, then flew via commercial aircraft to Kenya, with stopovers in Morocco and the United Arab Emirates. After arriving in Kenya, Jones traveled by land from Kenya to Somalia, which is a common travel route for foreign fighters traveling to Somalia to join al-Shabaab.

In Somalia, Jones joined al-Shabaab and was a member of the terrorist organization for approximately four years. During this time, Jones trained, worked and fought with al-Shabaab in Somalia. Among other things, Jones received three months of military training at an al-Shabaab training camp, where he learned, among other things, how to operate an AK-47 assault rifle and rocket-propelled grenades. Upon completion of this training, Jones also was assigned to al-Shabaab's specialized fighting force, Jaysh Ayman, and participated in combat against soldiers of the Kenyan government on behalf of al-Shabaab.

In particular, after joining Jaysh Ayman, Jones and his Jaysh Ayman unit participated in a battle in Afmadow, Somalia, against Kenyan government soldiers. Jones, armed with an AK-47 rifle, engaged in the fighting until he was injured by a missile and then hospitalized. After his release from the hospital, Jones continued to operate with al-Shabaab and, in particular, Jaysh Ayman.

Jones has appeared with other al-Shabaab fighters in videos that were recovered from an al-Shabaab fighter who participated in and was killed during the aforementioned Lamu Attack. In one of the videos, Jones can be seen holding a firearm, and in the company of several al-Shabaab fighters. The al-Shabaab fighters are depicted greeting each other, hugging each other and carrying firearms.

On Dec. 7, 2015, Jones was taken into custody by Somali authorities while he was attempting to procure a boat to depart Somalia for Yemen.

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Mr. Demers and Mr. Berman praised the investigative work of the FBI's New York Joint Terrorism Task Force – which principally consists of agents from the FBI and detectives from the NYPD. Mr. Berman also thanked the U.S. Department of Justice's National Security Division and Office of International Affairs, and the U.S. Department of State, for their assistance.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew J. DeFilippis and Shawn G. Crowley of the Southern District of New York, and Trial Attorney Raj Parekh of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section are in charge of the prosecution.

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