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(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

**LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER SENTENCED FOR MAKING
FALSE STATEMENTS TO FEDERAL AGENTS REGARDING HIS
KNOWLEDGE OF AND INVOLVEMENT WITH
TERRORIST ACTIVITIES**

Lafayette, Louisiana . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington and FBI Special Agent in Charge James Bernazzani announces that **MOHAMMAD SALMAN FAROOQ QURESHI**, age 47, from Lafayette, Louisiana, was sentenced today to 48 months imprisonment to be followed by 3 years supervised release and a \$50,000 fine by United States District Judge Rebecca Doherty for making false statements to federal agents in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001 in connection with counter-terrorism investigations. QURESHI pled guilty in February 2005.

After a lengthy sentencing hearing, Judge Doherty ruled that QURESHI obstructed multiple international counter-terrorism investigations. QURESHI admitted to lying to the federal agents during interviews in 1997, 1998, 2000, and 2004, and that his concealment and deception in those interviews protected the individuals under investigations, including himself. The Court ruled that the extent of the negative impact of his obstruction is impossible to calculate, but that perhaps lives could have been saved if QURESHI had cooperated in the counter-terrorism investigations.

QURESHI was interviewed by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1997, 1998, 2000, and 2004 in relation to investigations of federal crimes of terrorism. During these interviews, QURESHI made false statements to FBI agents and misrepresented the true nature of his knowledge of Osama bin Ladin, Wadih El Hage, El Hage's associates, and the non-governmental organization called Help Africa People.

During the sentencing hearing, QURESHI also admitted to a 4-year tax scam during the mid-late 1990's, when he fraudulently evaded the payment of United States income taxes by using relatives and associates in Pakistan and Sri Lanka to funnel over \$2.3 million from his QSystem business account in Lafayette, Louisiana, to fraudulent corporate entities in Pakistan.

Wadih El Hage was an associate of Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda terrorist organization. El Hage was tried and convicted in May 2001 for his involvement in the Al Qaeda conspiracy that was responsible for, among other things, the simultaneous

bombings on August 7, 1998, of the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. El Hage set up front companies and charities to provide cover and funding for other Al Qaeda members in Kenya. One such entity, Help Africa People/Africa Help, was used to provide cover identities, ostensible employment, and funds for Al Qaeda members involved in the conspiracy to bomb the U.S. Embassies. By QURESHI's admissions, at least \$30,000 of QURESHI's funds were given to Wadih El Hage in Nairobi, Kenya. El Hage is now serving a life sentence for his involvement in a terrorist conspiracy that included the United States Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.

During QURESHI's sentencing hearing, it was noted that Fazul Abdullah Mohammed's name is shown as a witness to a contract between QURESHI and El Hage creating a business relationship to buy and sell tanzanite gemstones. Fazul Abdullah Mohammed was a member of El Hage's Al Qaeda cell and remains a fugitive listed on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists list. Fazul Abdullah Mohammed was also indicted in September 1998, in the Southern District of New York for his alleged involvement in the bombings of the United States Embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya, on August 7, 1998. A \$5 million reward is being offered for any information leading to the apprehension or conviction of Mohammed. The El Hage trial included testimony and evidence regarding links between the tanzanite trade and Al Qaeda funding. U.S. Attorney Washington stated, "We owe our country our best efforts to root out and disrupt terrorists before they kill and injure others. We are proud of the result of this investigation. We hope that it signals our complete resolve to enforce the law and protect our country from anyone associated with terrorists."

Steve Krueger, FBI Senior Supervisory Resident Agent in Charge stated, "The FBI is pleased with the sentence handed down today. Several thousand FBI man-hours were expended during this investigation. This sentence should underscore the importance placed on the FBI's mission to protect United States citizens from further terrorist attacks. In order for the FBI to effectively protect the U.S., each citizen should look upon the opportunity to provide the U.S. Government helpful information as a duty or privilege, rather than a responsibility to be avoided."

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. United States Sentencing Guidelines established by the United States Congress and the United States Sentencing Commission are used as guidance by the judge in determining the appropriate sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This investigation was conducted by the Lafayette Unit of the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) which consists of agents and officers of numerous federal, state, and local law enforcement entities.

"I applaud the excellent work of the federal, state, and local officers and prosecutors on the Lafayette Joint Terrorism Task Force, particularly FBI Special Agents Don Bostic and Kristy Green", stated Washington.

The case was prosecuted by **United States Attorney Donald W. Washington and Assistant United States Attorney Richard A. Willis.**

For further information, please contact United States Attorney Donald W. Washington at 337-262-6618 or First Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Flanagan at 318-676-3600.

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