

Three Supporters of Foreign Terrorist Organization Al-shabaab Charged in Brooklyn Federal Court, Face Life in Prison

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

US Attorney's Office, Eastern District of New York

December 21, 2012

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/nye/pr/2012/2012dec21.html>

Earlier today, in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York, a superseding indictment was unsealed charging three men with providing material support to the designated foreign terrorist organization al-Shabaab and the unlawful use of highpowered firearms.¹ The defendants, ALI YASIN AHMED, also known as "Ismail," MADHI HASHI, also known as "Talha," and MOHAMED YUSUF, also known as "Abu Zaid," "Hudeyfa" and "Mohammed Abdulkadir," appeared in federal court in Brooklyn before the Honorable Sandra L. Townes this morning.

As stated in court today and according to court documents, between approximately December 2008 and August 2012, the defendants participated in weapons and explosives training with members and associates of al-Shabaab, and they agreed with others to support al-Shabaab and its Islamic extremist agenda. They were also deployed in combat operations to support al-Shabaab's military action in Somalia. In addition, the defendants participated in an elite al-Shabaab suicide bomber program. The charges were announced by Loretta E. Lynch, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; George Venizelos, Assistant Director in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI); and Raymond W. Kelly, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD).

The charges contained in the indictment are merely allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

"As alleged in the indictment, the defendants were committed supporters of al-Shabaab, a violent terrorist organization, who used high-powered firearms and participated in combat operations and al-Shabaab's suicide bombing program. We will use every tool at our disposal to combat terrorist groups, deter terrorist activity, and incapacitate individual terrorists," stated United States Attorney Lynch. Ms. Lynch thanked the federal, state and local law enforcement agencies who participate in the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York, as well as the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs and Counterterrorism Section, for their work on the case.

"As alleged, these defendants are not aspiring terrorists, they are terrorists. They did more than receive terrorist training: they put that training to practice in terrorist operations with al-Shabaab. Their capture and prosecution are important steps in the continuing campaign against terrorism," stated Assistant Director-in-Charge Venizelos.

In early August 2012, the defendants were apprehended in Africa by local authorities while on their way to Yemen. On October 18, 2012, a grand jury in the Eastern District of New York returned a sealed indictment against the defendants. On November 14, 2012, the Federal Bureau of Investigation took custody of the defendants and brought them to the Eastern District of New York.

On November 15, 2012, the grand jury returned a superseding indictment charging the defendants with one count of conspiracy to provide material support to al-Shabaab, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339B; one count of providing material support to al-Shabaab, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339B; and one count of unlawful use of machine guns, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(c). Later that same day, the defendants were assigned counsel and arraigned before Magistrate Judge Joan M. Azrack. At the joint request of the government and the defendants, those arraignments occurred in a sealed courtroom.

If convicted of all charges, each defendant faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 30 years and a maximum sentence of life in prison.

The government's case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Shreve Ariail, Seth D. DuCharme, and Richard M. Tucker with assistance from Trial Attorneys Joshua Larocca and Kelli Andrews of the Counterterrorism Section and Trial Attorneys Dan Stigall and Shanna Batten Aguirre of the Office of International Affairs.

The Defendants:

ALI YASIN AHMED, also known as "Ismail"
Age: 27

MADHI HASHI, also known as "Talha"
Age: 23

MOHAMED YUSUF, also known as "Abu Zaid," "Hudeyfa" and "Mohammed Abdulkadir"
Age: 29