

Department of Justice
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Three Defendants Arrested on Charges of Providing Material Support to a Foreign Terrorist Organization

Defendants Accused of Transferring Money to Al-Shabaab Insurgency in Somalia; Simultaneous Arrest Warrants Executed in Virginia, Washington State and the Netherlands

Three defendants were arrested today on charges of providing material support to al-Shabaab, a designated foreign terrorist organization that is conducting a violent insurgency campaign in Somalia. Two additional defendants are fugitives in Kenya and Somalia.

Assistant Attorney General John P. Carlin of the Justice Department's National Security Division, U.S. Attorney Dana J. Boente for the Eastern District of Virginia, Assistant Director in Charge Valerie Parlave of the FBI's Washington, D.C. Field Office and Special Agent in Charge Frank Montoya, Jr. of the FBI's Seattle Field Office, made the announcement.

A superseding indictment was issued on June 26, 2014, by a federal grand jury in the Eastern District of Virginia, charging the defendants with one count of conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization and 20 counts of providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization. The indictment was unsealed after the following arrest warrants were executed today:

Muna Osman Jama, 34, was arrested at her home in Reston, Virginia;

Hinda Osman Dhirane, 44, was arrested at her home in Kent, Washington;

Farhia Hassan was arrested at her residence in the Netherlands;

Fardowsa Jama Mohamed is a fugitive in Kenya and the subject of a pending arrest warrant; and

Barira Hassan Abdullahi is a fugitive in Somalia and the subject of a pending arrest warrant.

If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison on each count in the indictment.

The Harakat Shabaab al-Mujahidin, commonly known as al-Shabaab, is a terrorist group conducting a violent insurgency campaign in Somalia. In 2008, the U.S. government designated al-Shabaab as a foreign terrorist organization, and in February 2012, the leaders of al-Shabaab and the terrorist group al-Qa'ida publicly announced the merger of the two groups.

According to court records, defendants Muna Osman Jama and Hinda Osman Dhirane were the leaders of an al-Shabaab fundraising conspiracy operating in the United States, Kenya, the Netherlands, Somalia and elsewhere. Jama and Dhirane allegedly directed a network composed primarily of women who provided monthly payments that were coordinated, facilitated and tracked by the defendants to their conduits in Kenya and Somalia. According to court records, Jama was principally responsible for sending money to Kenya through her conduit, defendant Fardowsa Jama Mohamed, while Dhirane was primarily responsible for sending money to Somalia through her conduit, defendant Barira Hassan Abdullahi.

According to court records, the defendants would refer to the money they sent overseas as “living expenses,” and they repeatedly used code words such as “orphans” and “brothers in the mountains” to refer to al-Shabaab fighters, and “camels” to refer to trucks needed by al-Shabaab. The money transfers often were broken down into small amounts as low as \$50 or \$100, and the funds were intended for use by al-Shabaab insurgents operating in Somalia.

This case was investigated by the FBI’s Washington, D.C. and Seattle Field Offices. The Justice Department’s Office of International Affairs also played an essential role in coordinating the arrests and searches with foreign authorities.

Assistant U.S. Attorney James P. Gillis and Trial Attorney Danya E. Atiyeh of the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department’s National Security Division are prosecuting the case in the Eastern District of Virginia. The U.S. Attorney’s Office in Seattle also provided assistance.

Criminal indictments are only charges and not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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