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MALIAN NATIONAL CHARGED WITH THE OVERSEAS MURDER OF A U.S. CITIZEN AND PROVIDING MATERIAL SUPPORT TO TWO FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

The Defendant Is Currently in Custody in Mali

WASHINGTON – A criminal complaint was filed yesterday in federal court in Brooklyn, New York, charging Mimi Ould Baba, 32, a citizen of Mali, with the murder of U.S. citizen Michael J. Riddering and conspiring to provide material support, including personnel (including himself), services, and property to two designated foreign terrorist organizations, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Murabitoun. The defendant is currently in custody in Mali pending investigation and prosecution by Malian authorities.

“The charges filed allege that Mimi Ould Baba played a central role in the planning of two separate terrorist attacks directed at Westerners in Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire in early 2016. Those attacks resulted in the murder of American citizen Michael Riddering and 48 other innocent victims from numerous countries,” said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers. “Baba is currently in Malian custody for his terrorism-related activities. We fully support the Malian investigation and prosecution of Baba and will continue to work with the authorities there to pursue our shared goal of holding Baba accountable for his crimes. At the same time, these charges reflect that the U.S. justice system remains a powerful tool to bring to bear against those who harm our citizens abroad. We will continue to pursue justice for Mr. Riddering and for all American victims of terrorism. Our memories are long and our commitment to justice is unending.”

“The Eastern District of New York and our partners in U.S. law enforcement will continue to work tirelessly with foreign counterparts to identify, incapacitate and prosecute terrorists who target American citizens anywhere in the world,” stated United States Attorney Richard P. Donoghue for the Eastern District of New York. “Counter-terrorism remains our number one priority.” Mr. Donoghue expressed his grateful appreciation to the governments of Burkina Faso, Cote D’Ivoire and Mali for their continued support and assistance throughout this investigation.

“There’s nothing we could ever do to take away the pain felt by the families of those Baba killed during his 2016 terrorist attack in Burkina Faso, but four years later, we take some comfort in the fact that he will be held accountable for his egregious crime. I can only hope that as time goes on, we will remember the victims’ names instead of the attacker’s, especially our own American citizen Michael Riddering, who was killed that day,” stated FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge William F. Sweeney.

“Among the 30 killed in the attack four years ago was an American, Michael Riddering. Michael was in charge of an orphanage and a women’s crisis center in Burkina Faso. This case is another reminder that when terrorists kill an American, even half a world away, the FBI Special Agents and New York City Police Detectives of the JTTF will work as long as it takes, and go as far as it takes to bring justice,” stated NYPD Commissioner Dermot F. Shea.

As alleged in the complaint, Baba, along with the operations chief of al-Murabitoun and others, planned the Jan. 15, 2016, terrorist attack at the Café Cappuccino and Hotel Splendid in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Baba assisted in the planning and preparation for the attack by conducting surveillance of potential targets frequented by Westerners, facilitating the transportation and storage of AK-47 assault rifles and hand grenades to be used in the attack, conducting a walk-through of the attack with the three suicide operatives, and driving the armed operatives to the attack site on the day of the attack. Thirty people were killed in the terrorist attack, including American Michael J. Riddering and numerous victims from other Western countries and Burkina Faso. Riddering, a patron at the Café Cappuccino, was shot multiple times by the attackers and died at the scene. Following the attack, AQIM issued a public statement claiming responsibility for the attacks on behalf of AQIM and al-Murabitoun.

Baba also participated in the planning and preparation for the March 13, 2016, resort attack in Grand Bassam, Cote d’Ivoire. Following the attack in Ouagadougou, Baba met with the operations chief of al-Murabitoun to plan another attack against Westerners, this one in Cote d’Ivoire. Thereafter, Baba identified an individual to assist with the preparations for the attack and in identifying three suicide operatives to conduct the attack. Baba also procured the vehicle that was used to transport the weapons that were used in the attack. On

March 13, 2016, three suicide operatives armed with AK-47s and grenades attacked resort patrons along the beach of Grand Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire, killing 19 people from a number of countries and wounding many others. Following the attack, AQIM issued a public statement claiming responsibility for the attack.

The charges in the complaint are allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The government's case is being handled by the Office's National Security and Cybercrime Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Margaret E. Lee and Michael T. Keilty are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance provided by Trial Attorney Katie Sweeten of the Counterterrorism Section of the National Security Division of the Department of Justice. The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs of the Justice Department assisted in the investigation.

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