



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

News Release

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Man extradited from Netherlands appears in federal court on charges of supporting terrorists

MINNEAPOLIS—Earlier today in federal court in Minneapolis, Mahamud Said Omar made his initial appearance on charges related to supporting al-Shabaab, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization with ties to al-Qaeda. He appeared before United States District Court Chief Judge Michael J. Davis.

On August 20, 2009, Omar, age 45, formerly of Minneapolis, was indicted in federal court in the District of Minnesota with conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and foreign terrorist organizations as well as conspiracy to kill, kidnap, maim and injure persons abroad. Omar, also known as Mohamud Said Omar and Sharif Omar, was arrested in the Netherlands in November of 2009. He was extradited from the Netherlands to the United States earlier this week.

The 2009 indictment states that from September of 2007 through August of 2009, Omar, a Somali citizen who is a lawful permanent resident of the United States, conspired with others to provide financial assistance as well as personnel to al-Shabaab. Court documents allege that Omar gave money to young men so they could travel from Minneapolis to Somalia to train with and fight for al-Shabaab. Omar also allegedly visited an al-Shabaab safe-house in Marka, south of Mogadishu, where he provided the Minneapolis men with hundreds of dollars for the purchase of AK-47 assault rifles to use in their efforts.

This case arose out of “Operation Rhino,” an investigation that focused on the disappearance of young ethnic Somali men who lived in the Minneapolis area and were ultimately found to have been recruited to fight with al-Shabaab back in Somalia. The earliest groups of identified “travelers” departed the United States in October and December 2007, while others left in February 2008, August 2008, November 2008, and October 2009. Upon arriving in Somalia, the men resided in al-Shabaab safe-houses in Southern Somalia until constructing an al-Shabaab training camp, where they were trained by senior members of al-Shabaab along with a senior member of al-Qaeda.

This case is the result of an investigation by the FBI’s Minneapolis Joint Terrorism Task Force. The United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Minnesota is grateful for the assistance provided in this case by the Dutch National Police Agency (KLPD), the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice, the Office of the Dutch Public Prosecutor, the Justice Department’s Office of International Affairs, the State Department, and the FBI’s Legal Attache at the U.S. Embassy in the Hague in the Netherlands. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Charles J. Kovats and John Docherty and Trial Attorney William M. Narus of the U.S. Department of Justice National Security Division.

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An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by a defendant. A defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.