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News Release

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Ohio man charged with providing support to Somali-based terrorist group

MINNEAPOLIS – Earlier today in Columbus, Ohio, a 26-year-old man from Westerville, Ohio, was arrested for allegedly conspiring to provide material support to al-Shabaab, a designated foreign terrorist organization based in Somalia. After his arrest, Ahmed Hussein Mahamud made an initial appearance in federal court in the Southern District of Ohio and will now be transported to Minnesota, where the case against him will be prosecuted. Mahamud was charged by way of indictment with one count of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists, one count of providing material support to terrorists, one count of conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization, and one count of providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization. The indictment, which was filed in the District of Minnesota earlier this week, was unsealed following Mahamud's appearance in federal court this morning.

The indictment alleges that from a date unknown through the present time, Mahamud conspired with others to provide material support, including money and people, knowing such support would be used in Somalia by members of al-Shabaab, a U.S.-designated terrorist group, in its fight against the Ethiopian military, which supports the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia ("TFG") and African Union forces.

Court documents indicate that since September of 2007, approximately 20 young men have left the Minneapolis area for Somalia where they have trained with al-Shabaab. Many of them have gone on to fight with al-Shabaab against Ethiopian forces, the internationally-supported TFG, and African Union troops.

These charges stem from an ongoing, three-year investigation into the recruitment of persons from the U.S. to train with or fight for al-Shabaab. To date, a total of 18 persons have been charged in the District of Minnesota in indictments or criminal complaints that have been

unsealed. Eight of these Minnesota defendants have been arrested in the U.S. or overseas, five of whom have pleaded guilty. Of the remaining ten defendants, eight are at large and believed to be abroad; two others are believed to have died in Somalia.

This case is being investigated by the FBI's Minneapolis Joint Terrorism Task Force and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Charles J. Kovats, Jr. and John Docherty of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Minnesota, and Trial Attorney William M. Narus of the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's 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.