



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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March 22, 2012

**FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ARREST 10 AUSTIN AREA RESIDENTS
ON FEDERAL DRUG AND MONEY LAUNDERING CHARGES**

John E. Murphy, Attorney for the United States, FBI Special Agent in Charge Armando Fernandez, IRS-Criminal Investigation Special Agent in Charge Steve McCullough and Austin Police Chief Art Acevedo announced the arrest of ten Austin area residents, including Austin businessman Hussein Ali Yassine, on federal drug and money laundering charges.

Those arrested this morning without incident include:

40-year-old Hussein Ali Yassine of Austin; 35-year-old Hadi Ali Yassine of Austin; 38-year-old Mohammed Ali Yassine of Austin; 33-year-old Marisse Marthe Ruales; 32-year-old Nizar Hakiki of Austin; 29-year-old Karim Faiq of Manor, Texas; 29-year-old Amar Thabet Araf of Austin; 38-year-old Sami Derder of Pflugerville, Texas; 40-year-old Edgar Orsini of Cedar Creek, Texas; and, 42-year-old Alejandro Melendrez of Austin.

On Tuesday, a federal grand jury returned a total of five indictments in connection with this investigation which contained conspiracy, as well as substantive, cocaine distribution and money laundering charges. According to those indictments, the defendants carried out their various schemes in 2007, 2008 and 2009. With respect to the money laundering indictment, defendants Hussein Ali Yassine, Hadi Ali Yassine, Mohammed Ali Yassine and Ruales carried out their scheme in 2008 and 2009 and authorities believe that they used several business establishments located in downtown Austin to launder over \$200,000 in cash, which they believed to be the proceeds of narcotics trafficking. Defendants Mohammed Ali Yassine and Nizar Kakiki are also charged with one count of transferring a firearm knowing that the firearm would be used to commit a drug trafficking crime. In addition to filing criminal charges, the Government is seeking monetary judgements against the defendants totaling approximately \$300,000 which represent property involved in the alleged offenses.

The ten arrested defendants remain in federal custody pending detention hearings scheduled for Tuesday at 10:00am before U.S. Magistrate Judge Dennis Green in Austin. Upon conviction, maximum federal prison sentences for the defendants range anywhere from 20 years to life depending on the charge.

This investigation is being conducted by agents and investigators with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation and the Austin Police Department together with the Drug Enforcement Administration, Texas Attorney General's Office, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission and the Texas Comptroller's Office. Assistant United States Attorney Gregg N. Sofer and Jennifer Freel are prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

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