

# ***NEWS RELEASE***



## ***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA***

*San Diego, California*

*United States Attorney  
Laura E. Duffy*

*For Further Information, Contact:*

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*Assistant U.S. Attorney William Cole (619) 546-6762*

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*For Immediate Release*

### **SAN DIEGO JURY CONVICTS FOUR SOMALI IMMIGRANTS OF PROVIDING SUPPORT TO FOREIGN TERRORISTS** *Defendants Sent Money to al-Shabaab in Somalia*

#### **NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY** – February 22, 2013

SAN DIEGO, CA – A federal jury today convicted four Somali immigrants, including a popular imam at a City Heights mosque, of conspiring to provide material support to the terrorist group al-Shabaab.

The jury found that the four men - Basaaly Saeed Moalin, a cabdriver in San Diego; Issa Doreh, a worker at a money transmitting business that was the conduit for moving the funds; Mohamed Mohamed Mohamud, the imam at a mosque frequented by the city's immigrant Somali community; and Ahmed Nasiri Taalil Mohamud, a cabdriver from Anaheim – conspired to raise money for the foreign terrorist organization and send it back to Somalia.

During the three-week trial, the United States presented evidence that Moalin, Mohamud, Doreh and Nasir conspired to provide money to al-Shabaab, a violent and brutal militia group in Somalia that engages in suicide bombings, targets civilians for assassination, and uses improvised explosive devices. In February 2008, the U.S. Department of State formally designated al-Shabaab as a foreign terrorist organization.

At trial, the jury listened to dozens of the defendants' intercepted telephone conversations, including many conversations between defendant Moalin and Aden Hashi Ayrow, one of al-Shabaab's most prominent leaders who was subsequently killed in a missile strike on May 1, 2008. In those calls, Ayrow implored Moalin to send money to al-Shabaab, telling Moalin that it was "time to finance the Jihad."

Ayrow told Moalin, “You are running late with the stuff. Send some and something will happen.” In the calls played for the jury, Ayrow repeatedly asked Moalin to reach out to defendant Mohamud – the imam – to obtain funds for al-Shabaab.

According to the evidence presented at trial, the defendants conspired to transfer the funds from San Diego to Somalia through the Shidaal Express, a now-defunct money transmitting business in San Diego.

The United States also presented a recorded telephone conversation in which defendant Moalin gave the terrorists in Somalia permission to use his house in Mogadishu, Somalia, telling Ayrow that “after you bury your stuff deep in the ground, you would, then, plant the trees on top.” Prosecutors argued at trial that Moalin was offering a place to hide weapons.

When Moalin cautioned, however, that the house could be easily identified from afar, Ayrow replied: “No one would know. How could anyone know, if the house is used only during the nights?”

According to United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy, the prosecution was the result of a lengthy investigation by the San Diego Joint Terrorism Task Force. She said she is pleased with the verdict. “Justice was served today in San Diego,” Duffy said. “The jury clearly did not accept defense claims that months of intercepted conversations about bullets, bombings and Jihad were actually conversations about their charitable efforts for orphans and schools.

“This case proves that our efforts to detect and disrupt terrorist financing – and prevent the violence that goes along with it - has paid off. The United States Attorney’s Office is dedicated to investigating and vigorously prosecuting any persons who provide support or resources to terrorists or foreign terrorist organizations. I commend the hard work and dedication of San Diego’s Joint Terrorism Task Force in this case.”

FBI Special Agent in Charge Daphne Hearn commented, “While the FBI is not concerned with the legal transfer of funds to family, friends and charities overseas, when individuals provide material support to designated terrorists or terrorist organizations, the FBI and our Joint Terrorism Task Force partners will bring all resources to bear, to investigate these plots with a common goal of protecting all Americans from those who wish to do us harm.”

“These convictions illustrate the importance of collaboration when promoting national security,” said Derek Benner, special agent in charge for ICE Homeland Security Investigations in San Diego. “Protecting our nation’s security is our top priority, and I commend all of the federal law enforcement partners who worked tirelessly to make this a successful investigation.”

Al-Shabaab is a terrorist organization based in Somalia, with objectives including the overthrow of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the elimination of African Union support for the TFG. Al-Shabaab has engaged in, and used, violence, intimidation and acts of terrorism, including suicide bombings, in Somalia and elsewhere to further its objectives.

Here’s a breakdown of the verdict:

Defendant Moalin: Convicted of five counts including conspiracy to provide material support to terrorist, conspiracy to provide material support to foreign terrorist organization, conspiracy to launder monetary instruments, providing material support to terrorists and providing material support to foreign terrorist organization

Defendant Mohamed Mohamed Mohamud: Convicted of four counts including conspiracy to provide material support to terrorist, conspiracy to provide material support to foreign terrorist

organization, conspiracy to launder monetary instruments, and providing material support to foreign terrorist organization

Defendant Issa Doreh: Convicted of four counts including conspiracy to provide material support to terrorist, conspiracy to provide material support to foreign terrorist organization, conspiracy to launder monetary instruments, and providing material support to foreign terrorist organization

Defendant Ahmed Nasir Taalil Mohamud: Convicted of three counts including conspiracy to provide material support to terrorist, conspiracy to provide material support to foreign terrorist organization, and conspiracy to launder monetary instruments

Sentencing was set for May 16 at 9 a.m. before U.S. District Judge Jeffrey T. Miller.

This case was prosecuted in federal court in San Diego by Assistant United States Attorneys William Cole and Caroline Han and Department of Justice Trial Attorney Steven Ward. This case was investigated by the San Diego Joint Terrorism Task Force; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection.

### **Criminal Case No. 10cr4246-JM**

#### **DEFENDANTS**

Basaaly Saeed Moalin  
Mohamed Mohamed Mohamud  
Issa Doreh  
Ahmed Nasir Taalil Mohamud

#### **Criminal Case No. 10-CR-4246-JM**

#### **SUMMARY OF CHARGES**

Count 1 (all defendants): Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339A(a) - Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to Terrorists; Maximum penalties: 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Count 2 (all defendants): Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339B(a)(1) - Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to Foreign Terrorist Organization; Maximum penalties: 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Count 3 (all defendants): Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(h) - Conspiracy to Launder Monetary Instruments; Maximum penalties: 20 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine.

Count 4 (Basaaly Moalin): Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339A(a) - Providing Material Support to Terrorists; Maximum penalties: 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Count 5 (defendants Basaaly Moalin, Mohamed Mohamed Mohamud, and Issa Doreh): Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339B(a)(1) - Providing Material Support to Foreign Terrorist Organization; Maximum penalties: 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

#### **PARTICIPATING AGENCIES**

San Diego Joint Terrorism Task Force  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection

