

Two Members of Al-Shabaab Sentenced for Conspiring to Provide Material Support to the Terrorist Organization

Ali Yasin Ahmed, aka Ismail, 31, and Mohamed Yusuf, aka Abu Zaid, Hudeyfa and Mohammed Abdulkadir, 33, were each sentenced to 11 years in prison by U.S. District Judge John Gleeson of the Eastern District of New York for conspiring to provide material support to al-Shabaab, a designated foreign terrorist organization.

The sentences were announced by Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, U.S. Attorney Robert L. Capers of the Eastern District of New York and Assistant Director in Charge Diego Rodriguez of the FBI's New York Field Office.

As stated in court today and according to court documents, between approximately December 2008 and August 2012, the defendants served as members of al-Shabaab in Somalia, where they supported al-Shabaab and its extremist agenda. In early August 2012, the defendants were apprehended in East Africa by local authorities while on their way to Yemen. On Nov. 14, 2012, the FBI took custody of the defendants and brought them to the Eastern District of New York for prosecution. They pleaded guilty on May 12, 2015.

"Ahmed and Yusuf travelled to Somalia to fight on behalf al-Shabaab as part of the terrorist organization's cadre of foreign fighters," said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. "The National Security Division remains committed to identifying, disrupting and holding accountable all who seek to provide material support to and fight on behalf of designated foreign terrorist organizations."

"These defendants left their adopted European homes to support al-Shabaab, a violent terrorist organization that has demonstrated its capabilities and motives in numerous terrorist attacks overseas and has publicly called for attacks against the United States," said U.S. Attorney Capers. "Today's significant sentences reflect the seriousness of the defendants' criminal conduct and will serve as a strong deterrent to others considering the path to violence."

"The guilty plea and sentencing of these men for providing material support to al-Shabaab, demonstrates the U.S. government's commitment and leadership in prosecuting persons whose intention is to violently assault societies different than their own," said Assistant Director in Charge Rodriguez. "We remain steadfast in identifying and stopping such attacks. We will continue to work within the framework of the U.S. justice system to hold terrorists accountable for their malicious intentions and criminal actions. Special thanks to all our law enforcement and intelligence community partners on the JTTF, whose joint efforts keep us safe. We are also grateful for the international cooperation we received to bring these terrorism subjects to justice."

The defendants, both naturalized Swedish citizens, traveled to Somalia intending to wage violent jihad on the U.N.-sanctioned African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali government forces that were attempting to bring stability to that war-torn country. Once in Somalia, the defendants participated in numerous attacks on government forces. Yusuf is featured in an al-Shabaab propaganda video in which he encourages young men to travel to Somalia and join al-Shabaab and threatened a cartoonist who had depicted the prophet Mohammad. A third defendant, Madhi Hashi, is scheduled to be sentenced on Jan. 29, 2016.

Assistant Attorney General Carlin joined U.S. Attorney Capers in thanking the federal, state and local law enforcement agencies who participate in the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York.

The prosecution is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Shreve Ariail, Seth D. DuCharme and Richard M. Tucker of the Eastern District of New York, along with Trial Attorney Annamartine Salick of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section. Trial Attorney Shanna Batten of the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs and Dan Stigall of the National Security Division also provided invaluable assistance.

