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Public Information

Georgia Imam Pleads Guilty to Support of Terrorist Group

ROME, Ga. — A Georgia man pleaded guilty in federal court October 13 to providing material support to Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization.

Mohamed Shorbagi, 42, of Rome, Ga., pleaded guilty as the result of a criminal complaint and plea agreement that had been filed in and sealed by the federal court in August.

Shorbagi was charged with providing financial support to Hamas and conspiring with unnamed others to provide such material support. He provided the support through donations to the “Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development” (HLF), knowing that some or all of the money was in fact destined for Hamas.

An ICE investigation determined that Shorbagi knew that money provided to HLF was actually funneled to Hamas because, in part, he was a Georgia representative for HLF and he had attended HLF meetings at which high-level Hamas officials made presentations condemning Israel. Shorbagi himself also had hosted high-level Hamas officials at the Rome, Ga., mosque at which he served as imam. He did so knowing that Hamas had been designated as a foreign terrorist organization engaged in terrorist activity.

Shorbagi has entered a plea agreement in which he agrees that, under the federal sentencing guidelines, he would be sentenced to the statutory maximum of 15 years in prison. He has also agreed to cooperate fully and truthfully with the government. If the government determines that such cooperation substantially assists in the investigation or prosecution of other persons, it will file a motion to reduce the sentence. Shorbagi also agreed to pay full restitution to victims of fraud crimes he had committed, and the government agreed not to charge him in consideration of his cooperation.