

News Releases

FEBRUARY 25, 2011

PHILADELPHIA, PA

Alleged supporter of terrorist group extradited from Paraguay *Lebanese native, naturalized United States citizen has initial appearance in U.S. District Court*

PHILADELPHIA - Following a joint investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the FBI, Moussa Ali Hamdan, a former resident of Brooklyn, N.Y., has been charged with conspiring to provide material support to Hizballah. The 38-year-old is a dual citizen of the United States and Lebanon.

Hamdan is among several defendants charged in the conspiracy. He was indicted Nov. 24, 2009, along with nine co-defendants. Hamdan was taken into U.S. custody in Asuncion, Paraguay on Thursday by U.S. Marshals who escorted him to Washington, D.C. At the time of the indictment, Hamdan had left the United States.

On June 15, 2010, Paraguayan authorities arrested him in the Tri-Border Area of Paraguay for the crime of material support of terrorism.

He is charged in 28 of 31 counts in the indictment, including conspiring to provide material support to Hizballah in the form of proceeds from the sale of counterfeit money, stolen (genuine) money, and fraudulent passports. According to the indictment, Hamdan and several other defendants were also charged with several counts of transporting stolen goods, trafficking in counterfeit goods, and making false statements to government officials.

According to a related criminal complaint, Hamdan began purchasing purportedly stolen cellular telephones from a cooperating witness acting as an agent of the government and participated in the purchase and transportation of purportedly stolen goods on numerous occasions. These stolen goods included cellular phones, laptop computers, Sony Play Station 2 systems, and automobiles, which the conspirators caused to be transported to destinations outside Pennsylvania, including overseas destinations such as Lebanon and Benin.

Hamdan also allegedly bought counterfeit goods; namely, counterfeit Nike shoes and Mitchell & Ness sports jerseys, from the cooperating witness. The complaint details efforts by Hamdan and his co-defendants to sell the cooperating witness counterfeit U.S. currency for the purpose of raising funds for Hizballah. In total, the conspirators provided the cooperating witness with approximately \$10,000 in counterfeit U.S. currency. The complaint also alleges that certain of Hamdan's co-defendants generated additional funds for Hizballah by selling fraudulent passports.

If convicted of all charges, Hamdan faces a statutory maximum sentence of 260 years in prison.

The case was investigated by the FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Force; ICE HSI; the New Jersey State Police; Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division; U.S. Secret Service; Defense Criminal Investigative Service; the Department of Commerce, Office of Export Enforcement; U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security; U.S. Customs and Border Protection; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Explosives; Federal Air Marshals; Pennsylvania State Police and the Philadelphia Police Department.

It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nancy Beam Winter and Vineet Gauri, and National Security Division Counterterrorism Section Trial Attorney Jolie F. Zimmerman.