



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOVEMBER 4, 1998

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PRESS RELEASE

MARY JO WHITE, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and LEWIS D. SCHILIRO, Assistant Director in Charge of the New York FBI Office, announced that USAMA BIN LADEN and MUHAMMAD ATEF, a/k/a "Abu Hafs," were indicted today in Manhattan federal court for the August 7, 1998, bombings of the United States embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and for conspiring to kill American nationals outside of the United States.

The United States Department of State also announced today rewards of up to \$5 million each for information leading to the arrest or conviction of BIN LADEN and ATEF.

The first count of the Indictment charges that BIN LADEN and ATEF, along with co-defendants WADIH EL HAGE, FAZUL ABDULLAH MOHAMMED, MOHAMED SADEEK ODEH, and MOHAMED RASHED DAUD AL-'OWHALI, acted together with other members of "al Qaeda," a worldwide

terrorist organization led by BIN LADEN, in a conspiracy to murder United States nationals. The objectives of this international terrorist conspiracy allegedly included: killing members of the American military stationed in Saudi Arabia and Somalia; killing United States nationals employed at the United States Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; and concealing the activities of the co-conspirators by, among other things, establishing front companies, providing false identity and travel documents, engaging in coded correspondence and providing false information to the authorities in various countries.

BIN LADEN's organization al Qaeda allegedly functioned both on its own and through some of the terrorist organizations that operated under its umbrella, including the Al Jihad group based in Egypt, the Islamic Group (also known as "el Gamaa Islamia" or simply "Gamaa't"), led at one time by Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, and a number of jihad groups in other countries, including the Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Somalia. Al Qaeda also allegedly maintained cells and personnel in a number of countries to facilitate its activities, including in Kenya, Tanzania, the United Kingdom and the United States.

According to the Indictment, BIN LADEN and al Qaeda forged alliances with the National Islamic Front in the Sudan and with representatives of the government of Iran, and its associated terrorist group Hezbollah, with the goal of working together

against their perceived common enemies in the West, particularly the United States.

In order to further this international conspiracy to murder United States nationals, BIN LADEN and other co-conspirators are alleged to have committed the following acts: (1) providing training camps for use by al Qaeda and its affiliates; (2) recruiting United States citizens including the defendant EL HAGE to help facilitate the goals of al Qaeda; (3) purchasing weapons and explosives; and (4) establishing headquarters and businesses in the Sudan.

The Indictment also alleges that fatwahs were issued by BIN LADEN and a committee of al Qaeda members urging other members and associates of al Qaeda to kill Americans. According to the Indictment, several of these fatwahs called for attacks on American troops stationed in Saudi Arabia and Somalia. The Indictment also alleges that American troops in Somalia were indeed attacked and killed by persons who received training from al Qaeda members or those trained by al Qaeda. The Indictment specifically charges that the August 7, 1998, bombings of the United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania as actions taken in furtherance of this conspiracy to kill American nationals.

BIN LADEN and ATEF, along with ABDULLAH MOHAMMED, ODEH, and AL-'OWHALI, are also charged with bombing the two embassies and causing the deaths of more than 200 persons and injuring more than

4,500 others. Those five defendants are also charged with murdering all of the civilians killed in the embassy bombings. The Indictment names all of the victims of the bombings and each victim is charged as a separate count of murder for a total of 224 counts of murder against BIN LADEN, ATEF, ABDULLAH MOHAMMED, ODEH, and AL-'OWHALI.

Ms. WHITE and Mr. SCHILIRO said the investigation of this case is being conducted by the Joint Terrorist Task Force composed of the FBI, the New York City Police Department, the United States Department of State, the United States Secret Service, the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Federal Aviation Administration, the United States Marshals Service, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the New York State Police and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Ms. WHITE and Mr. SCHILIRO praised the Governments of Kenya, Tanzania and the Comoros Islands for their cooperation in this investigation and praised all the investigative efforts and cooperation of the agencies involved in the case. They also said that the investigation is continuing.

United States Attorney General Janet Reno stated: "This is an important step forward in our fight against terrorism. It sends a message that no terrorist can flout our laws and murder innocent civilians."

Ms. WHITE stated: "Usama Bin Laden and his military

commander Muhammad Atef are charged with the most heinous acts of violence ever committed against American diplomatic posts. These acts caused the deaths of hundreds of citizens of Kenya, Tanzania and the United States. All those responsible for these brutal and cowardly acts, from the leaders and organizers to all of those who had any role in these crimes in East Africa, will be brought to justice."

Mr. SCHILIRO stated: "This investigation has been given the highest priority. Our investigative strategy is clear: We will identify, locate and prosecute all those responsible right up the line, from those who constructed and delivered the bombs to those who paid for them and ordered it done. This has been an investigation which has involved the largest deployment of FBI agents abroad, including members of the Joint Terrorist Task Force. Working closely with the law enforcement authorities in Kenya and Tanzania, our investigators have made significant progress, yet much remains to be done."

BIN LADEN and ATEF, both of whom are fugitives, face a maximum sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, or death.

Assistant United States Attorneys PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, KENNETH M. KARAS and MICHAEL J. GARCIA are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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