

Aden Hashi Farah Ayro

Ayro, a member of the Ayr clan and thought to be 29 or 30 years of age, is one of the most violent Salafi militia leaders and a protégé of Aweys. His extremism seems similar to that of the late al-Qa'ida leader Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, in that he alienated his fellow clansmen by the specter of violence he created. He also lacks serious religious credentials and, which combined with his youth, make it unlikely for him to inherit the leadership of a major Salafi organization in Somalia.

Ayro was appointed by Aweys to head the Hizb al-Shabab, or youth wing of the Islamic Courts Union, and is also the leader of other militias, although it is not entirely clear what groups he heads within Somalia or what their political agendas are. His group has been linked to the killings of four foreign aid workers and a dozen or more Somalis who had been working with Westerners. He received military training in Afghanistan prior to the U.S.-led invasion and has ties to al-Qa'ida operatives Abu Talha al-Sudani and Ahmed Abdi Godane. He was also among the Somali delegation of mujahidin that traveled to Lebanon in July 2006 to fight Israeli forces.

Sources:

“Al-Ittihad al-Islami.” Federation of American Scientists <<http://www.fas.org/>> Accessed 11 February 2007.

“Al-Zawahiri yatahadi Bush fi al-`Iraq wa yatawa`id al-Ithiubiyin fi al-Sumal.” *Elaph*, January 23, 2007.

Boukhars, Anouar. “Understanding Somali Islamism.” *Terrorism Monitor* 4:10 (2006).

Burke, Jason. *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror*. London: I.B. Taurus, 2003.

“Hargeysa Judicial Court Acquits ‘Hassan Dahir Aweys’ Of Terrorism.” *Somaliland Times*, December 9, 2006.

“Hikmatiyar: Sa`adna bin Ladin `ala al-farar min Tura Bura; najat qiyadi: al-Qa`ida al-kibar fi al-Sumal.” *Al-Sharq al-Awsa*, January 12, 2007.

International Crisis Group, “Somalia's Islamists.” *Africa Report* N°100 (2005).

Marquardt, Erich. “Al-Qaeda's Threat to Ethiopia.” *Terrorism Monitor*, 3: 3 (2005).

Sii'arag, Duale A. “The Birth and Rise of Al-Ittihad Al-Islami in the Somali Inhabited Regions in the Horn of Africa.” <<http://www.somaliawatch.org>> Accessed 12 February 2007.

“Somali Fighters: We'll Heed al Qaeda's Call.” CNN. January 6, 2007.

Terdman, Moshe, and Deborah Touboul. "Al-Qaeda in Africa." *Islam in Africa Newsletter* 2:1 (2007).

U.S. Central Command. Al-Qaeda Leaders, Jihadist Websites on Somali Islamists. <<http://www.centcom.mil/>> Accessed 10 February 2007.

Winter, Joseph. "Profile: Somalia's Islamist Leader." BBC News. June 30, 2006. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5120242.stm>>