
THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* VIRGINIA

NEWS



Somalis Sentenced to Life in Prison on Charges Relating to Piracy of the S/V Quest

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NORFOLK, Va. – Mohamud Hirs Issa Ali, a/k/a Sanadaaq, 32, and Jilani Abdiali, a/k/a Ilkasse, 20, both of Somalia, were sentenced today in Norfolk federal court to life in prison for their acts of piracy against the S/V Quest, which resulted in the murder of United States citizens Scott Underwood Adam, Jean Savage Adam, Phyllis Patricia Macay and Robert Campbell Riggle.

Neil H. MacBride, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Janice K. Fedarcyk, Assistant Director-in-Charge of the FBI's New York Field Office; Alex J. Turner, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Norfolk Field Office; and Mark Russ, Special Agent in Charge of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) in Norfolk, made the announcement after the men were sentenced by United States District Judge Mark S. Davis.

Ali pled guilty to piracy under the law of nations and hostage taking resulting in death on May 23, 2011. Abdiali pled guilty to piracy under the law of nations on May 20, 2011.

“As Somali pirates expand their territory, they place more individuals’ lives at risk,” said U.S. Attorney MacBride. “These men willingly joined this group of pirates out of greed, knowing full well that their actions could – and did – lead to the death of their hostages. They will spend their lives in prison for what they willingly chose to do and the lifetime of suffering and pain they thrust on the victims’ loved ones.”

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Fedarcyk stated: “Piracy in its modern form is carjacking at sea. It is not glamorous; it is violent and often murderous. The crew of the Quest did nothing to antagonize their captors. They were a target of opportunity. The FBI is committed to stopping crime on the high seas.”

Ali admitted in court that he was the commander of the pirate ship when it left Somalia. They seized the Quest about 840 miles out of Somalia, and he transferred the pirates and a number of weapons over to the Quest via a skiff. He carried an AK-47, which he used for guard duty over the hostages,

and he ordered a co-defendant to fire an RPG toward the Navy vessel while the Navy was attempting to secure the hostages' release through negotiations with the conspirators. In his plea, he warranted that he did not personally shoot or order the shooting of the four Americans. He received two concurrent terms of life in prison today.

Abdiali admitted that he willingly engaged in piracy for financial gain and participated in the pirating of the Quest and the taking of the four Americans on board as hostages. He warranted in his plea agreement that he did not personally shoot any of the Americans, nor did he instruct any other person to shoot the hostages.

The investigation of the case is being conducted by the FBI and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

The prosecution in the Eastern District of Virginia is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Benjamin L. Hatch, Joseph DePadilla and Brian J. Samuels, from the U.S. Attorney's Office, and Trial Attorney Paul Casey from the Department of Justice's National Security Division.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia at <http://www.justice.gov/usao/vae>. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia at <http://www.vaed.uscourts.gov> or on <https://pcl.uscourts.gov>.