Omar Hammami

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Omar Hammami, an American citizen from Alabama who once served as primary recruiter for Al Shabaab, the Somali-based terrorist organization affiliated with Al Qaeda, was killed September 13, 2013 at age 29 by members of Al Shabaab.

Between 2007 and 2011, he was a public face and voice of Al Shabaab and a critical part of the terrorist organization’s effort to recruit English-speakers. Hammami was identified in Al Shabaab statements and recordings as Abu Mansour al Amriki, Arabic for "Abu Mansour the American."

Al Shabaab disseminated online propaganda videos featuring Hammami that sought to recruit young American men to join its insurgency against Somalia's transitional governments and its Ethiopian supporters. In his numerous written, video and audio statements, Hammami issued appeals to Americans and other English-speakers "to come and live the life of a mujahid [holy warrior]."

There have been approximately 50 known incidents of Americans who have travelled or attempted to travel to Somalia to join Al Shabaab, or who have otherwise attempted to provide support to the organization, since 2007. Similar attempts have also been documented in Britain, Australia, and Canada.

On August 5, 2010, federal authorities unsealed an indictment charging Hammami with providing material support to terrorists. In November 2012, the FBI added him to its Most Wanted Terrorists list, and in March 2013 the Treasury Department's
Rewards for Justice program offered a $5 million reward for information leading to his capture.

As early as January 2012, evidence emerged of a conflict between Hammami and other members of Al Shabaab, which became fully public in a March, 2012 YouTube video in which Hammami claimed his "life may be endangered by [Al Shabaab] due to some differences that occurred between us regarding matters of the Shariah and matters of strategy." The rift appeared to focus on questions of strategy and local versus international focus.

In a September 3 2013 interview with the Voice of America, Hammami confirmed his break with Al Shabaab, saying that he is "still a terrorist" but no longer a member of Al Shabaab or of Al Qaeda. Less than two weeks later, Hammami was purportedly killed by members of Al Shabaab's elite intelligence service, the Amniyatt Mukhabarat.

A version of this report was first posted February 9, 2010