



Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation

OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

Ben Gurion Way 30 South Wells Street Chicago, Illinois 60606-5056
TEL: (312) 346-6700 • FAX: (312) 855-2474 • Website: www.juf.org

JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL WELCOMES SENTENCING OF HAMAS SUPPORTER MUHAMMAD SALAH

Today, July 11, America's finest standards of justice were served in a Chicago Federal courtroom when Judge Amy St. Eve sentenced Muhammad Salah of Bridgeview, Illinois, to 21 months in prison and fined him \$25,000. A jury of his peers found Salah guilty for obstructing justice by lying about his support for the terrorist organization Hamas.

Salah enjoyed all the protections afforded by our system of justice, including the rights to legal representation, to cross-examine his accusers, to avoid testifying himself, and to solicit letters to the judge pleading for leniency.

We applaud the US Attorney's office for pursuing criminal charges against Salah. International terrorism is made possible by global networks of individuals funding, planning and committing acts targeting innocents. As we've known for years, those global networks have many Chicago connections.

The US Attorney's office responded to protect American citizens and punish those who, exploiting the very freedoms afforded by our country, violate our laws.

Although the prosecution in this case was not fully successful, that Salah will serve time in federal prison marks a victory for our nation's efforts to keep all Americans safe. The sentencing also demonstrates that, despite the challenges in prosecuting terrorism cases, US Attorneys should not be deterred from prosecuting supporters of international terrorism.

During more than two months, Salah's prosecutors presented evidence that he was involved in criminal activities, from conspiracies to commit murder and kidnapping to money laundering.

In our view, Salah's defense offered little challenge to the veracity of the government's evidence and failed to present evidence of its own refuting the government's compelling case. Notably, Salah chose to not take the stand to deny the allegations and to defend himself. Instead, his defense was mostly political arguments, inviting the jury to ignore the evidence.

For more than a dozen years, the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago has tracked Chicago-area connections to international terrorism. For years after Salah's assets were frozen, it seemed like neither he nor the local "charities" reportedly linked to Hamas and al-Qaeda would ever face the legal implications of their actions. But today, eight years after Salah's assets were frozen and six years after the assets of the Chicago-area groups Benevolence International Foundation, Global Relief Foundation, and the Holy Land Foundation were frozen, important information and legal repercussions are emerging from Chicago courtrooms.

Despite the significance of today's sentencing, we remain somber. Our thoughts and prayers remain focused on the hundreds of victims of Hamas terrorism.

In particular, we think of David Boim, of blessed memory. An American teenager, David was murdered by Hamas. Mohammad Salah was among those found liable for his murder in a Chicago civil trial several years ago.

Mohammad Salah will be a free man in 21 months, some time in 2009. Stanley and Joyce Boim, David's bereaved parents, will then be marking the 13th year of life without their son. We hope today's sentence brings some measure of comfort to them and helps prevent others from losing their loved ones to the scourge of terrorism.

Alan Solow, JCRC Chairman

Jay Tcath, JCRC Executive Director