

## **IV. Lesser Members/Affiliates of Al-Qa'ida**

### **A. 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, this 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 and what their political agenda is. As mentioned above, 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.

### **B. Gouled Hasan Dourad**

Dourad was born in Somalia in 1974 and is currently detained by the United States in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He lived in refugee camps in Germany following civil war in Somalia and eventually received asylum from Sweden. According to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Gouled was the head of a division of al-Ittihad that supported al-Qa'ida members in Somalia, working for the leader of al-Qa'ida's East African cell, Abu Talha al-Sudani. In this capacity, he procured safe houses and weapons for al-Qa'ida militants, and did reconnaissance for a proposed suicide attack on the U.S. base Camp Lemonier in Djibouti.

The imam of his mosque in Sweden put him and an associate in touch with individuals who sent him to Afghanistan, where he trained in explosives and weaponry at al-Qa'ida's camp Khaldan. He returned to Somalia in 1996 and joined the fighting against Ethiopians in Ogaden, working with both AIAI and al-Qa'ida members. He continued these activities as al-Ittihad was becoming defunct, although its leaders remained active and attempted to continue operations.

### **C. Abu Talha al-Sudani (Tariq `Abd Allah)**

Abu Talha is an al-Qa'ida operative with extensive explosives training, and alleged to be close to bin Laden. He was born in Sudan and married a Somali woman, and they resided in Somalia beginning in 1993. He is also an associate of Gouled Hasan Dourad, working with the Mogadishu cell of AIAI that was responsible for supporting al-Qa'ida members.

He, along with Dourad and Salih `Ali Salih Nabhan were the targets of the American air strikes on Somalia in January 2007. According to the testimony of Jamal al-Fadl, he received explosives training from Hizb Allah in southern Lebanon in the early 1990s. He is believed to have assisted Fazil in the car bombing and attempted attack on the Israeli airliner in Kenya in 2002.

Following the 1998 embassy bombings, a number of the East African cell members involved in the attack were arrested. The remaining members at large, including Fazul, were assisted financially by Abu Talha, who was traveling frequently between Somalia and the United Arab Emirates at the time.

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