



A Message to the Somali American Community: Be Kind And Be Careful By: SomaliCAN

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Columbus, Ohio- As many of you are aware, 14 people were indicted in federal court on terror related charges, including two Somali-American women from Minnesota. The allegations against these women indicate that they manipulated the concern of the Somali community about the suffering of people in Somalia to send money to violent groups. The charges state that the women took advantage of the generosity of unsuspecting Somalis.

Kindness, generosity, and helping the needy are all good deeds. Americans pay billions of dollars in donor funding each year to poor countries. Millions of those end up in Somalia. The US State Department and USAID support organizations such as the American Red Cross, Mercy International, CARE, American Refugee Committee, World Vision, and countless number of other international and local organizations to alleviate the suffering of people in Somalia.

It is a noble act to be generous and kind to the civilians in Somalia who suffer from suppression by ruthless criminals, poverty in its worst forms, disease, and starvation. Thousands of people are caught in the crossfire daily and dozens die due to malnutrition, disease, and violence. The United States people and government proudly continue to be kind to the poor and to embrace them to reduce their suffering all over the world. Most recently, in response to the Pakistani floods, the US government provided \$35 million in flood relief.

SomaliCAN encourages Somali-Americans to be generous to causes that they are passionate about- education, healthcare, children, reconstruction, peace-making, family, and all forms of peaceful activities. Give individually and collectively. Give directly to the needy and indirectly through aid organizations such as the American Red Cross, UNICEF, CARE International and similar organizations that have proven track record of providing assistance in humanitarian crisis situations.

Generosity is encouraged by the Somali culture, the Islamic faith and it is an American value. The bad behavior of one individual should not divert us from supporting our loved ones in Somalia and elsewhere, especially now that the holy month of Ramadan is approaching. However, we have a serious problem when bad people capitalize on the Somali tragedy to support violent groups. We should strive to put our safety first. Good intention is not enough. We should take extra steps to ensure that the dollars we give to charity are not misused. We do not want to provide fuel for the war in Somalia.

We are responsible for our money- how we earn it and how we spend it. Let us choose to spend it wisely.

SomaliCAN is a community outreach and advocacy organization based in Columbus, Ohio. You can reach us by e-mail at info@somalican.org.