

# Decade-old fraud affair threatens to derail ex-president Hassan Sheikh's political comeback

The American lawyer Jeremy Schulman stands accused by the US Department of Justice of having personally benefited from a move to recover Somalian state assets a decade ago. The affair could compromise the reputation of the then government and its leader, the ex-president Hassan Sheikh, who is bidding to return to power next February.



*Former president Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud. ©Zhai Jianlan / Xinhua News Agency/Newscom/MaxPPP*

A decade-old affair is rearing its ugly head again at the very worst moment for the former Somalian president **Hassan Sheikh Mohamud**, who will once again be bidding for the highest office in the land next February. The American lawyer **Jeremy Schulman** has been indicted on eleven charges by a Maryland court. He stands accused of misusing a state mandate between 2009 and 2014 in attempting to obtain \$12.5m in assets from the **Central Bank of Somalia** (CBS). Hassan Sheikh served as president of Somalia from 2012 to 2017, and he and his entourage were directly implicated in this fraud affair by a 2014 **United Nations** report which the US **Department of Justice** (DOJ) has drawn on in conducting its investigations.

According to the DOJ indictment, which *Africa Intelligence* has seen, Schulman repeatedly passed himself off as a legal representative of the Somalian government in dealings with a range of financial institutions in order to get control of these assets, making use of faked documents obtained from accomplices within the Somalian administration of the time. Schulman has not responded to *Africa Intelligence's* requests for comment.

These assets were deposited abroad and frozen in 1991 by the CBS governor **Ali Abdi Amalo** to prevent them from being seized in the midst of the civil war. Schulman and his alleged accomplice **Abdiaziz Hassan Amalo** (the nephew of **Ali Abdi Amalo**), a US citizen who had high-level contacts within the government of transition in 2009, are accused of returning only \$9m of the assets to the Somalian authorities and to have personally enriched themselves in the process.

## Confidential report

Ali Abdi Amalo is alleged to have communicated, under the pressure of his nephew, the list of frozen assets, and using this list it is claimed that Schulman and Abdiaziz Hassan Amalo were able to identify the various assets deposited abroad with public and private institutions in countries ranging from France, Italy and the United Kingdom to the United States. The indictment, which is the fruit of a six-year investigation by the **Federal Bureau of Investigation** (FBI), the **Internal revenue service** (IRS) and the DoJ, relates to only \$12.5m of these assets, which are thought to total over \$300m. According to our information, even the \$9m supposedly returned to CBS via an account in Turkey has not been located, and neither has the list allegedly used by Schulman and Amalo.

Only Schulman and Amalo are named in the DoJ indictment, but in 2014 when the UN first addressed these allegations of fraud, some of the most senior figures in the administration were directly implicated, including the then president Hassan Sheikh, who at the very least was suspected of having explicitly consented to the fraud. His advisor **Musa Haji Mohamed Ganjab**, a Somali businessman close to Amalo who is currently residing in South Africa, is not cited by name in the indictment, but he would seem to correspond very precisely to the individual designated as "Co-conspirator 1" in the document. The governor of the CBS in 2013, **Abdusalam Omer**, designated as "Former governor 3", also features. These three men were previously singled out as beneficiaries of the repatriation of these assets in a confidential report by the UN monitoring group on Somalia, the publication of which resulted in the resignation of Abdusalam Omer in 2013.

Schulman's ties with Somalia go back a long way. His clients have included the former deputy prime minister **Abdirahman Haji Aden Ibbi** (*Africa Intelligence*, [16/09/20](#)) and the current head of the **Somali Police Force**, **Sadak Mohamed** (*Africa Intelligence*, [01/11/19](#)).

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