



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* MICHIGAN

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Michigan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Michigan Man Charged With Using \$1 million in Covid-Relief Loans To Purchase Seaview Condominium in Beirut, Lebanon

DETROIT, MI - A Dearborn Heights man was arrested today in connection with a wire fraud and money laundering scheme involving more than \$1 million Economic Injury Disaster Loans. United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison was joined in this announcement by the FBI's Acting Special Agent-In-Charge, Josh P. Hauxhurst.

Wahid Mohamed Makki, 59, was charged with a criminal complaint, unsealed today, in the Eastern District of Michigan with one count of wire fraud and one count of money laundering. He is scheduled to make an initial appearance today before a United States Magistrate Judge. According to the criminal complaint, Wahid Makki transferred approximately \$1,082,600 from ten separate EIDL loans obtained for 10 shell corporations to a bank in the Republic of Turkey via international wire. The wire transfer instructions reflect that the Wahid Makki transferred the funds for the purchase of a "sea view condo in Beirut, Lebanon."

The CARES Act is a federal law enacted March 29, 2020. The CARES Act authorizes the SBA to provide Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) of up to \$2 million to eligible small businesses experiencing financial disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

My office remains committed to using every available federal tool — including both criminal and civil remedies — to combat and prevent COVID-19 related fraud," said United States Attorney Dawn Ison. "We will continue to hold accountable those who seek to exploit the pandemic for personal gain, to protect vulnerable populations, and to safeguard the integrity of taxpayer-funded programs."

"Economic Injury Disaster Loans played a significant role in keeping many Michigan businesses running during the pandemic," said Josh Hauxhurst, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Detroit Division. "This defendant is alleged to have taken money from that program and used it to purchase property overseas. This is a serious crime and the FBI is committed to finding and investigating anyone guilty of defrauding this program."

A criminal complaint is merely an allegation, and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. Trial cannot be held on felony charges in a complaint. When the investigation is completed, determinations will be made whether to seek a felony indictment.

This case was investigated by the FBI. Assistant United States Attorney Philip A. Ross is prosecuting the case.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>

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