



# Financial Crimes Enforcement Network

*A bureau of the U.S. Department of the Treasury*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FinCEN Assesses Civil Money Penalty Against Michigan-Based Unregistered Money Transmitter**

Vienna, Va. – The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) today announced an assessment of civil money penalties totaling \$40,000 against brothers [Omar Abukar Sufi](#) and [Mohamed Abukar Sufi](#), for non-compliance with Bank Secrecy Act (BSA) money transmitter registration requirements. The Sufi brothers, doing business as Halal Depot of Wyoming, Michigan operated a money transmission business at their grocery store by sending funds on behalf of their customers to beneficiaries in Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Qatar, Europe and the United Arab Emirates. At no time did the Sufi brothers register with FinCEN as a money services business (MSB) as required by the BSA.

MSB registration is an essential part of the government's efforts against money laundering, terrorist financing, and other financial crimes. Failure to comply with this fundamental requirement undermines efforts by law enforcement and other government agencies in enforcing the laws intended to protect the U.S. financial system from abuse. FinCEN's regulatory framework seeks to diminish the risk of criminal abuse of MSBs and support the availability of legitimate financial services to consumers.

"MSB registration is a foundational element of the BSA's regulatory framework," noted FinCEN Director James H. Freis, Jr. "By complying with registration, reporting and recordkeeping obligations, businesses not only assist law enforcement, but also protect themselves and their customers from criminal activities."

The Sufi brothers facilitated the transfer of tens of thousands of dollars over the course of multiple years. The brothers accepted cash and other instruments, such as food stamp proceeds, and charged fees of 6-7 percent per transaction to facilitate these transfers. They recently pled guilty in United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan to federal criminal charges of food stamp fraud and operating an unlicensed money transmitting business, among

other charges. The brothers were sentenced to five years in prison and required to pay restitution to the U.S. Department of Agriculture which funds the food stamp program.

For further information on this case may be found on the [homepage](#) of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Michigan.

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*F*inCEN's mission is to enhance U.S. national security, deter and detect criminal activity, and safeguard financial systems from abuse by promoting transparency in the U.S. and international financial systems.