

The Guardian

Two Egyptians face extradition over US embassy bombings

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Two Egyptians were today ordered to face extradition hearings later this month for last year's bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania which left 226 people dead.

The two, arrested on Sunday on an extradition warrant after a request by the US, appeared at Bow Street magistrates' court. Magistrate Graham Parkinson postponed the case until July 19, saying the US government had to clarify why it had waited so long to issue warrants for them.

The US wants Ibrahim Hussein Abdel Hadi Eidarous, 42, and Adel Mohammed Abdul Almagid Bary, 39, to face charges of conspiracy to murder over the attacks on August 7, 1998, which killed at least 215 people in Nairobi, Kenya and 11 in the Tanzanian capital Dar es Salaam.

Both men were silent in court as their lawyers denied their clients' involvement in the devastating attacks. Prosecuting lawyer Arvinder Sambi, representing the US government, said both suspects had handled faxes claiming responsibility for the bombings and both had been found in possession of false passports.

One fax arrived at the Grapevine fax shop in London at 4.53am on the day of the attack. Another fax was sent out after the bombings at 7.30am the same morning from a post office in west London, Ms Sambi said. Copies of both faxes were subsequently found at the offices of the Advice and Reform Council, allegedly a front for the terrorist organisation Al Qade - Arabic for The Leadership - in London.

"Mr Eidarous's fingerprints were found on the claims of responsibility and were found prior to the bombings. Mr Bary's fingerprints were on the fax that was sent after," Ms Sambi said.

Mr Eidarous's signature had also been found on a threatening letter issued before the attacks, while Mr Bary's signature appeared on a rent document alongside that of Khalid al-Fawwaz, a Saudi businessman, she said.

Mr Al-Fawwaz, also the subject of a US extradition request relating to the bombings, is being held in a British prison after appearing in court last month. His hearing was adjourned until September 4. Some 15 people have been charged in connection with the attacks.

The prosecution said Mr Eidarous and Mr Bary were associates of Mr al-Fawwaz and by extension had links to Osama bin Laden, the Saudi dissident accused by the US of masterminding the attacks. Mr bin Laden, who has been living in Afghanistan as a guest of the ruling Taliban movement, has denied any involvement in the embassy bombings.

In retaliation for the bombings, the US launched cruise missiles at suspected terrorist camps in Afghanistan run by Mr bin Laden. US warplanes also attacked a suspected chemical weapons factory in Sudan, although there was no convincing evidence that the plant produced anything more lethal than aspirin.

Mr Bary's lawyer summed up the US government's case as "a cocktail of surmise and sensationalised hypothesis". Mr Eidarous's lawyer said her client had been subjected to a "Kafkaesque nightmare".

Although he has denied any role in the attacks against Americans, Mr bin Laden last month expressed admiration for the people who bombed American forces in Saudi Arabia in 1995 and 1996 and said that all Americans were legitimate targets.

Last week, Washington warned that Mr bin Laden might be preparing another attack as the anniversary of the embassy bombings approaches. It briefly closed six of its African embassies in late June.

The US has also tried to put pressure on Mr bin Laden by ordering a freeze on Taliban assets within US jurisdiction and barring trade with the group.

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