



## PRESS RELEASE

# Six Members of a Former Cult Convicted of Forced Labor Conspiracy Charges in Years-Long Scheme that Included Multiple Minors

Monday, September 16, 2024

**For Immediate Release**

Office of Public Affairs

Following a 26-day trial, a jury in Kansas convicted Kaaba Majeed, 50, Yunus Rassoul, 39, James Staton, 62, Randolph Rodney Hadley, 49, Daniel Aubrey Jenkins, 43, and Dana Peach, 60, of conspiracy to commit forced labor. The jury additionally convicted Kaaba Majeed of five counts of forced labor. Two other co-defendants, Etenia Kinard, 48, and Jacelyn Greenwell, 45, previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit forced labor.

According to the evidence presented in court during the course of the trial, the defendants were all former high-ranking members of the United Nation of Islam (UNOI), or were wives to the UNOI founder, Royall Jenkins.

“The United Nation of Islam and these defendants held themselves out as a beacon of hope for the community, promising to educate and teach important life skills to members, particularly children,” said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. “Instead, the defendants betrayed this trust, exploiting young children in the organization by callously compelling their labor. Prosecuting this case is a testament to the Justice Department’s unwavering commitment to hold human traffickers accountable. The Justice Department will continue to vigorously investigate and prosecute parasitic criminals who target vulnerable victims to finance their lifestyles.”

"The bravery shown by victims of the United Nation of Islam is inspiring, because they spoke up about heinous atrocities committed against them as vulnerable children," said U.S. Attorney Kate E. Brubacher for the District of Kansas. "In childhood, they suffered physical and emotional abuse, were denied a proper education, and were subject to forced labor. As adults, these victims found the strength and courage to pursue justice and face their abusers."

"Under the guise of false pretenses and coercion, these victims, some of whom were as young as eight years old, endured inhumane and abhorrent conditions," said Special Agent in Charge Stephen Cyrus of the FBI Kansas City Field Office. "Today's convictions should serve as a stark warning that forced labor will not be tolerated by the FBI."

UNOI principles included many rules that members had to follow, required "duty" or unpaid labor and emphasized the negative eternal religious consequences of noncompliance. UNOI operated businesses in various cities around the United States, including Kansas City, Kansas; New York City; Newark, New Jersey; Cincinnati, Ohio; Dayton, Ohio; and Atlanta, among other locations.

In their former leadership roles in UNOI, the defendants agreed to compel the labor and services of over a dozen victims, including multiple minors, some of whom were as young as eight years old, between October 2000 and November 2012. The victims worked in UNOI-owned and operated restaurants, bakeries, gas stations, laboratory and a clothing and sewing factory, often up to 16 hours a day. The victims also provided child care and domestic services inside defendants' homes. None of the victims was ever compensated for the years of work they performed at UNOI businesses or at the behest of the defendants. The victims all lived in deplorable conditions, in overcrowded facilities often overrun with mold, mice and rats. In contrast, the defendants and their immediate families lived comfortably.

The evidence presented in court demonstrated that the defendants used a variety of coercive tactics to compel the victims' labor and services. In essence, the defendants effectively controlled the victims by manipulating the UNOI rules originally created by the founder.

First, the defendants separated the minor victims from their parents and support network. UNOI enticed parents to send their children to Kansas by promising an education and development of life skills through work at UNOI-operated businesses. However, these promises were false. The minors did not receive an education from an accredited and licensed school but instead worked excessive hours for UNOI's financial benefit. UNOI's unlicensed and unaccredited school or "university" was little more than a vehicle for extracting unpaid labor and publicly humiliating victims who violated one of UNOI's many rules.

Second, the defendants controlled (1) what the victims viewed and read; (2) how the victims dressed; (3) how the victims addressed the defendants and others; (4) with whom the victims communicated; (5) where the victims went; and (6) what the victims ate, to ensure that the victims, particularly the females, maintained a certain weight. The defendants restricted and monitored the victims' communications with their families, members of the opposite sex and

others. The defendants required some victims to undergo colonics, which is a procedure designed to cleanse the colon by streaming gallons of water through a tube inserted into the victims' rectums. At the same time, the defendants rarely permitted victims to receive outside medical attention for illnesses or injuries.

Third, the defendants regularly punished the victims for violating the rules. The defendants withheld food, prohibited victims from speaking to others for over two weeks, locked them in a dark, frightening basement, imposed extra work and beat them, sometimes in front of others to create a climate of fear and intimidation. The defendants even held one victim upside down over train tracks because he would not admit to stealing food when he was hungry. Another victim drank water from a toilet because she was so thirsty after not being permitted to drink.

Finally, the defendants instilled a fear of noncompliance and of leaving the UNOI by depriving victims of any education or development of life skills. The defendants also told victims that they would burn in "eternal hellfire" if they left. Family members who remained at UNOI were required to shun as "detractors" any victim who left, and UNOI claimed credit for any negative consequence that occurred to members who left the organization.

Sentencing hearings are scheduled for Feb. 18, 2025. Kaaba Majeed faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison as well as mandatory restitution. The rest of the defendants each face a maximum penalty of five years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The FBI Kansas City Field Office, with the assistance of the Department of Labor and New York State Department of Labor, investigated this case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Ryan Huschka for the District of Kansas and Trial Attorneys Kate Alexander, Maryam Zhuravitsky and Francisco Zornosa of the Civil Rights Division's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit are prosecuting the case.

Anyone who has information about human trafficking should report that information to the National Human Trafficking Hotline toll-free at 1-888-373-7888, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For more information about human trafficking, please visit [www.humantraffickinghotline.org](http://www.humantraffickinghotline.org). Information on the Justice Department's efforts to combat human trafficking can be found at [www.justice.gov/humantrafficking](http://www.justice.gov/humantrafficking).

*Updated September 16, 2024*

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Washington

Good afternoon. My name is Kristen Clarke, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department.

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