

Beat: News

Three Haitian Nationals and One U.S. Citizen Charged with Firearms Trafficking

In Support of 400 Mawozo Gang in Haiti

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USPA NEWS - An indictment was unsealed May 4th charging four defendants with participating in a criminal conspiracy to violate U.S. export laws by smuggling firearms and munitions to Haiti.

The indictment charges Joly Germine, also known as "Yonyon," 29, a Haitian national; Eliande Tunis, 43, a U.S. citizen, of Pompano Beach, Florida; Jocelyn Dor, 29, a Haitian citizen who had been residing in Orlando, Florida, and Walder St. Louis, 33, a Haitian citizen who had been residing in Miami. They are charged with conspiring to violate export control laws and to defraud the United States, violating export control laws, smuggling, and laundering money.

Matthew M. Graves, U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, and George Piro, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Miami Field Office made the announcement today.

Tunis, Dor, and St. Louis were apprehended in Florida in October and November 2021. They pleaded not guilty and are being detained pending trial. The indictment was returned by a grand jury in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on Nov. 30, 2021. On May 3, 2022, the Haitian government transferred Germine into United States custody on the basis of the District of Columbia arrest warrant. Germine appeared this afternoon before Magistrate Judge Robin M. Meriweather and was ordered detained pending further court proceedings.

The indictment alleges that, from at least September through November 2021, Germine, Tunis, Dor, and St. Louis conspired to acquire and supply firearms and munitions to members of the 400 Mawozo gang in Haiti. As alleged in the indictment, 400 Mawozo is a Haitian gang and criminal organization that operated in the Croix-des-Bouquets area to the east of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. From at least on or about Jan. 12, 2020, 400 Mawozo was engaged in armed kidnappings of U.S. citizens in Haiti for ransom.

Germine, who has been incarcerated in Haiti since 2018, serves as a leader of 400 Mawozo and directed operations from prison using unmonitored cell phones, the indictment alleges. According to the indictment, Tunis, Dor, and St. Louis obtained from Germine specifications for weapons and ammunition that Germine and other gang members wanted sent to Haiti. Tunis, Dor, and St. Louis, all of whom resided in Florida, purchased a number of firearms at Florida gun shops, including rifles, pistols, and handguns, while falsely stating that they were the "actual buyers" of the firearms. Tunis, Dor, and St. Louis then smuggled the firearms and ammunition to Haiti, concealing them in shipping containers, the indictment alleges. The indictment also outlines the defendants' use of the U.S. financial system to facilitate the illegal firearm purchases.

The 400 Mawozo gang claimed responsibility for kidnapping 16 U.S. citizens, including five children, and one Canadian citizen who were part of a missionary organization visiting an orphanage in Port au Prince, Haiti, in the fall of 2021. The kidnapping of the U.S. citizens remains under investigation and no charges have been filed for those crimes.

The charges in the indictment are merely allegations, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. If convicted of any offense, a defendant's sentence will be determined by the court based on the advisory Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The case is being investigated by the FBI's Miami Field Office. Valuable assistance was provided by the Haitian National Police. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen P. Seifert, with assistance from Paralegal Specialist Jorge Casillas and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Hunter Deeley, of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia.

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