

Democratic Senator Menendez charged with being an unregistered agent of the Egyptian government

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On Thursday, Robert Menendez, Democratic Senator from New Jersey, was charged with acting as an unregistered agent of the Egyptian government while he was a member of Congress, including his time as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The charge is included in a superseding indictment of an indictment issued on September 24 that laid out multiple counts of bribery.

The latest charges were filed in federal court in the Southern District of New York against the senator, his wife Nadine Menendez and Wael Hana, an Egyptian businessman.

The prior indictment included photographs of cash, gold bars and a luxury car accepted by Menendez from three New Jersey businessmen, including Hana, in exchange for his help and influence in relation to legal cases against the three.

The new charge against Menendez states: “From at least in or about January 2018 through at least in or about June 2022, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere ... the defendants, and others known and unknown, willfully and knowingly combined, conspired, confederated, and agreed together and with each other to have a public official, to wit, ROBERT MENENDEZ, act as an agent of a foreign principal, to wit, the Government of Egypt and Egyptian officials, required to register under FARA ...”

FARA stands for the Foreign Agents Registration Act, a law requiring any person acting in the US as an “agent of a foreign principal” to register with the US Attorney General. Additionally, the law imposes a total ban on any member of Congress agreeing to be or acting as a foreign agent.

The federal prosecutors in the case have asked a

judge to seize the Menendez’s residence in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, as well as a Mercedes-Benz convertible the government says was given to them as a bribe.

The new charge against the senator was brought after more than 30 Senate Democrats—including Cory Booker, the other New Jersey senator—called for Menendez to resign. After pleading not guilty to the initial charges along with his co-defendants, Menendez told a closed-door meeting of fellow Democrats that he would not leave the Senate. Following the September indictment, the *Washington Post* reported that Menendez intended to run for reelection next year.

Another Democrat, New Jersey Representative Andy Kim, has announced a primary campaign for the Senate seat. The leader of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, Michigan Senator Gary Peters, has said he will withhold support for the incumbent if he does not resign. Representative Kim called on the Senate to expel Menendez on Thursday.

Robert Menendez, the son of Cuban immigrants who left the Caribbean island in the early 1950s, has been in the US Senate since 2006, after serving in the House of Representatives for 13 years. He built his career on the politics of anticommunism and, as explained in our previous article on the bribery charges against Menendez, falsified his own history and claimed that his family had property confiscated in Cuba by the Castro regime.

Menendez has been the subject of repeated charges of corruption as a senator. In 2015, he was indicted on charges of bribery, fraud and making false statements for using his office to pressure the Dominican Republic to follow through on a contract with a major donor to

the senator's campaigns.

The new indictment says that Menendez, his wife and Wael Hana met with an Egyptian intelligence official in Menendez's Senate office in Washington D.C. in May of 2019. They allegedly discussed an American citizen, who was seriously injured in a 2015 airstrike by the Egyptian military using US-made equipment.

At the time, influenced by the incident, members of Congress opposed military assistance to Egypt. Federal prosecutors reported that a search of Wael Hana's cellphone "revealed thousands of text messages, many via an encrypted application, with Egyptian military and intelligence officials, pertaining to various topics, including Menendez, and including requests and directives for Hana to act upon."

The prosecutors allege that after the Egyptian government granted Hana's company a lucrative monopoly to certify that all meat imported into the country met religious requirements, Menendez urged US agriculture officials to stop investigating the agreement. They also say that Menendez interfered in two criminal cases, pushing for prosecutors to drop an investigation or give leniency to his Egyptian contacts.

Both the new and the previous charges against Menendez expose rampant corruption at the highest levels of the US government. They also expose the reactionary foreign policies of the Democrats and the utter hypocrisy of their claims to be defenders of democracy and human rights.

According to the latest indictment, the senior Democratic senator functioned for years as an agent of one of the most brutal dictatorships in the world—that of Abdel Fattah El-Sisi—who seized power in a 2013 military coup that overthrew the elected government of President Mohamed Morsi.

Responding to the new indictment, Menendez said it "flies in the face of my long record of standing up for human rights and democracy in Egypt and in challenging leaders of that country, including President (Fattah) El-Sisi on these issues."

According to the indictment, while Menendez was illegally collaborating with representatives of the El-Sisi regime between 2020 and 2022, he made multiple requests of the US Justice Department to investigate others for failing to register under FARA, including an unnamed ex-member of Congress.



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