



PRESS RELEASE

Former U.S. Senator Robert Menendez Sentenced To 11 Years In Prison For Bribery, Foreign Agent, And Obstruction Offenses

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of New York

Two New Jersey Businessmen Who Paid Bribes Also Sentenced to 97 Months and Seven Years in Prison

Danielle R. Sassoon, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that former U.S. Senator ROBERT MENENDEZ, WAEL HANA, a/k/a “Will Hana,” and FRED DAIBES, were sentenced to 11 years, more than eight years, and seven years in prison, respectively, for bribery, foreign agent, and obstruction of justice offenses. MENENDEZ, HANA, and DAIBES were convicted on July 16, 2024, following a nine-week jury trial before U.S. District Judge Sidney H. Stein, who imposed today’s sentences.

U.S. Attorney Danielle R. Sassoon said: “The sentences imposed today result from an egregious abuse of power at the highest levels of the Legislative Branch of the federal government. Robert

Menendez was trusted to represent the United States and the State of New Jersey, but instead he used his position to help his co-conspirators and a foreign government, in exchange for bribes like cash, gold, and a luxury car. The sentences imposed today send a clear message that attempts at any level of government to corrupt the nation's foreign policy and the rule of law will be met with just punishment."

According to the Superseding Indictment ("Indictment"), the evidence at trial, and public filings: [\[1\]](#)

MENENDEZ, at the time the Indictment was unsealed, was the senior U.S. Senator from New Jersey and the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee ("SFRC"). Shortly after MENENDEZ began dating his now-wife Nadine Menendez, then known as Nadine Arslanian ("Nadine Menendez"), in 2018, Nadine introduced MENENDEZ to her long-time friend HANA, who is originally from Egypt. HANA lived in New Jersey, and maintained close connections with Egyptian officials. HANA was also a business associate of DAIBES, a New Jersey real estate developer and long-time donor to MENENDEZ, and Jose Uribe, who worked in the New Jersey insurance and trucking business.

Between 2018 and 2022, MENENDEZ and Nadine Menendez agreed to and did accept hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of bribes from HANA, DAIBES, and Uribe. These bribes included gold, cash, a luxury convertible, payments toward Nadine Menendez's home mortgage, compensation for a low-or-no-show job for Nadine Menendez, home furnishings, and other things of value. In June 2022, the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") executed a court-authorized search warrant at the New Jersey home of MENENDEZ and Nadine Menendez. During that search, the FBI found many of the fruits of this bribery scheme. Over \$480,000 in cash — much of it stuffed into envelopes and hidden in clothing, closets, and a safe — was discovered in the home. Some of the envelopes contained the fingerprints of MENENDEZ or DAIBES. Agents also found home furnishings provided by HANA and DAIBES, the luxury vehicle paid for by Uribe parked in the garage, as well as over one hundred thousand dollars' worth of gold bars in the home, which were provided by either HANA or DAIBES.

In exchange for these and other things of value, MENENDEZ agreed and promised to use his power and influence as a Senator to seek to protect HANA's, Uribe's, and DAIBES's interests and to benefit foreign countries. Through this corrupt relationship, MENENDEZ agreed to take a series of official acts. First, MENENDEZ took actions to benefit the Government of Egypt and HANA, including by improperly seeking to pressure an official at the U.S. Department of Agriculture ("USDA") in an attempt to protect a business monopoly granted to HANA by Egypt,

and by secretly representing the interests of Egypt by, among other things, ghostwriting a letter for Egypt to be provided to his own Senate colleagues and providing non-public information and assistance to Egypt. Second, MENENDEZ took actions seeking to disrupt a criminal investigation undertaken by the Office of the New Jersey Attorney General (“NJAG”) related to Uribe and his associates. Third, MENENDEZ recommended that the President nominate a U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey whom MENENDEZ believed he could influence to disrupt a federal criminal prosecution undertaken by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of New Jersey (“USAO-DNJ”) of DAIBES, and took actions to assist DAIBES by acting for the benefit of the Government of Qatar. Finally, MENENDEZ conspired and endeavored to obstruct justice in connection with the federal investigation into this scheme.

Promised Actions to Benefit Egypt and Pressure the USDA

Shortly after she began dating MENENDEZ in 2018, Nadine Menendez worked with HANA to introduce Egyptian government officials to MENENDEZ. Those introductions helped establish a corrupt agreement in which HANA, with assistance from DAIBES, provided bribes to MENENDEZ and Nadine Menendez in exchange for MENENDEZ’s agreed and promised actions to benefit Egypt and HANA, among others.

As part of the scheme, MENENDEZ, among other things, provided sensitive, non-public U.S. government information to Egyptian officials and otherwise took steps to secretly aid the Government of Egypt. For example, in or about May 2018, MENENDEZ provided Egyptian officials with non-public information regarding the number and nationality of persons then serving at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt. Although this information was not classified, it was deemed highly sensitive because it could pose significant operational security concerns if disclosed to a foreign government or made public. Without telling his professional staff or the State Department that he was doing so, on or about May 7, 2018, MENENDEZ texted that sensitive, non-public embassy information to his then-girlfriend Nadine Menendez, who forwarded the message to HANA, who forwarded it to an Egyptian government official. Later that same month, MENENDEZ ghost-wrote a letter on behalf of Egypt to other U.S. Senators advocating for them to release a hold on \$300 million in aid to Egypt. MENENDEZ sent this ghost-written letter to Nadine Menendez, who forwarded it to HANA, who sent it to Egyptian officials.

At various times between 2018 and 2022, MENENDEZ also conveyed to Egyptian officials, through Nadine Menendez, HANA, and/or DAIBES, that he would approve or remove holds on foreign military financing and sales of military equipment to Egypt in connection with his leadership role on the SFRC. For example, in or about July 2018, following meetings between MENENDEZ and Egyptian officials, which were arranged and attended by Nadine Menendez and HANA, MENENDEZ texted Nadine Menendez that she should tell HANA that MENENDEZ was going to sign off on an almost hundred-million-dollar weapons sale to Egypt. Nadine Menendez

forwarded this text to HANA, who forwarded it to two Egyptian officials, one of whom replied with a “thumbs up” emoji.

In exchange for MENENDEZ’s agreement to take these and other actions, HANA promised Nadine Menendez payments, including from IS EG Halal Certified, Inc. (“IS EG Halal”), a New Jersey company that HANA operated with financial support and backing from DAIBES. IS EG Halal had no revenue until the spring of 2019, when the Government of Egypt granted IS EG Halal a monopoly on the certification of U.S. food exports to Egypt as compliant with halal standards, despite the fact that neither HANA nor his company had any experience with halal certification. The monopoly generated revenue for HANA, through which he paid Nadine Menendez as promised.

Because the monopoly harmed U.S. interests, including revoking the ability of multiple U.S. companies to certify meat and resulting in increased costs for U.S. meat suppliers, in or about April and May 2019, the USDA and the U.S. Embassy in Cairo contacted the Government of Egypt and sought reconsideration of its grant of monopoly rights to IS EG Halal. After being briefed on the USDA’s objections to IS EG Halal’s monopoly by HANA and Nadine Menendez, on May 23, 2019, MENENDEZ called a high-level USDA official, the Undersecretary of Agriculture for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs (“Official-1”), and insisted that the USDA stop opposing IS EG Halal’s status as the sole halal certifier. When Official-1 attempted to explain why the monopoly was detrimental to U.S. interests, MENENDEZ reiterated his demand that the USDA stop interfering with IS EG Halal’s monopoly. Official-1 did not accede to MENENDEZ’s demand, and sought to reassure his staff against the pressure MENENDEZ attempted to apply, but IS EG Halal nevertheless kept its monopoly.

After financially benefitting from IS EG Halal’s monopoly, HANA, at times with the assistance of DAIBES, provided payments and other things of value in furtherance of the scheme. For example, in or about July 2019, after the mortgage company for the residence of Nadine Menendez initiated foreclosure proceedings, HANA caused IS EG Halal to pay approximately \$23,000 to bring the mortgage current. HANA did so after a series of discussions with Nadine Menendez, as well as Uribe and DAIBES, about various options for bringing the mortgage current. Later in 2019, HANA and DAIBES caused IS EG Halal to issue three \$10,000 checks to a “consulting” company MENENDEZ helped Nadine Menendez create as supposed payment for a low-or-no-show job. As the scheme continued, including through the additional actions described below, MENENDEZ and Nadine Menendez received additional bribes, including gold and cash.

Promised Actions Seeking to Disrupt the NJAG Criminal Case

Also in 2019, HANA and Uribe offered to help buy a new Mercedes-Benz C-300 convertible worth more than \$60,000 for MENENDEZ and Nadine Menendez. In exchange, MENENDEZ agreed and sought to interfere in the NJAG’s criminal insurance fraud prosecution of an

associate of Uribe and a related investigation involving an employee of Uribe. On multiple occasions in 2019, Uribe, HANA, and/or Nadine Menendez briefed MENENDEZ regarding the NJAG's insurance fraud prosecution and investigation. Following those briefings, and in exchange for the promise of the luxury convertible, MENENDEZ contacted the then-New Jersey Attorney General ("Official-2") at least twice. During those communications, MENENDEZ attempted to pressure Official-2 to resolve the prosecution more favorably to Uribe's associate. Official-2 considered MENENDEZ's actions inappropriate, did not agree to intervene, and did not pass on that MENENDEZ had contacted him in order to insulate his staff against any outside influence from MENENDEZ. Ultimately, in the regular course, the prosecution was resolved with a plea allowing for no jail time for Uribe's associate and the investigation never resulted in any charges against Uribe's employee.

In exchange for MENENDEZ's agreed and promised actions, Uribe provided Nadine Menendez with \$15,000 cash for the down payment on the luxury convertible in April 2019. Thereafter, Uribe made monthly payments to Mercedes-Benz for the convertible between 2019 and June 2022. Uribe only stopped making those monthly payments after the FBI approached MENENDEZ, Nadine Menendez, and Uribe in connection with this investigation.

Promised Actions Seeking to Disrupt the USAO-DNJ Criminal Case and to Benefit DAIBES and the Government of Qatar

In October 2018, the USAO-DNJ charged DAIBES with federal criminal charges for obtaining loans under false pretenses from a New Jersey-based bank he founded. Between December 2020 and 2022, MENENDEZ agreed and promised to attempt to influence the pending federal prosecution of DAIBES in exchange for cash, furniture, and gold bars that DAIBES provided to MENENDEZ and Nadine Menendez. In furtherance of this aspect of the scheme, MENENDEZ recommended that the then-President nominate an individual ("Official-3") as U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey whom MENENDEZ believed he could influence with respect to DAIBES's case. MENENDEZ requested a political advisor contact Official-3 in an attempt to influence the outcome of DAIBES's case.

MENENDEZ's political advisor did not contact Official-3 regarding DAIBES's case, and USAO-DNJ did not treat the case any differently as a result of MENENDEZ's actions. The parties to DAIBES's case agreed to resolve the case with a plea agreement that provided for a probationary sentence. In exchange for MENENDEZ's participation in the bribery scheme, DAIBES provided MENENDEZ and Nadine Menendez with multiple things of value, including two one-kilogram gold bars.

In addition, in exchange for some of the gold and other things of value from DAIBES, MENENDEZ knew that DAIBES also expected MENENDEZ to take action to benefit the Government of Qatar, and thereby benefit DAIBES, who was seeking millions of dollars in investment from a fund with ties to the Government of Qatar. Among other things, MENENDEZ

made multiple public statements supporting the Government of Qatar and provided DAIBES with these statements so that DAIBES could share them with Qataris officials connected to an investment fund with which DAIBES was looking to do business. For example, on or about August 20, 2021, MENENDEZ used an encrypted messaging application to send DAIBES the text of a press release in which MENENDEZ praised the Government of Qatar, and several minutes later texted DAIBES, “You might want to send to them. I am just about to release.”

Obstruction of Justice and Attempts to Cover-Up the Scheme

In or about 2022, following service of subpoenas issued by a federal grand jury sitting in the Southern District of New York on MENENDEZ, Nadine Menendez, Uribe, and IS EG Halal, Nadine Menendez met with Uribe. At that meeting, Nadine Menendez and Uribe agreed that if law enforcement asked about the payments Uribe had made for the Mercedes-Benz convertible, they would falsely say those payments had been a loan. Later, in or about December 2022, MENENDEZ and Nadine Menendez sought to return both the bribe money that HANA had caused IS EG Halal to pay to the mortgage company in July 2019 to avoid foreclosure on Nadine Menendez’s home and the payments Uribe made for the convertible, and, in doing so, MENENDEZ and Nadine Menendez falsely characterized the return of the bribe money as repayments for loans in documents that were produced to the grand jury. The next year, in September 2023, in an attempt to avoid charges being brought, MENENDEZ caused his then-counsel to give a presentation at the United States Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York in Manhattan falsely stating that MENENDEZ had been unaware of the mortgage and car payments until receipt of the subpoenas in 2022, and that these payments from HANA and Uribe were loans, even though MENENDEZ knew such statements to be false.

* * *

A chart containing the names of the defendants, the charges they were convicted of, and the sentences they received is set forth below.

Uribe, 57, of Clifton, New Jersey, previously pled guilty pursuant to a cooperation agreement to conspiracy to commit bribery, conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud, honest services wire fraud, conspiracy to commit obstruction of justice, obstruction of justice, tax evasion, and wire fraud. Sentencing for Uribe is scheduled for April 24, 2025.

Charges remain pending against Nadine Menendez, who is presumed innocent and is scheduled to go to trial on March 18, 2025.

Ms. Sassoon praised the outstanding investigative work of the FBI. Ms. Sassoon also thanked the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation for its invaluable assistance on the investigation and the Department of Justice’s National Security Division, Counterintelligence and Export Control Section for its support of the case.

This case is being handled by the Office’s Public Corruption Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Eli J. Mark, Paul M. Monteleoni, Lara Pomerantz, Daniel C. Richenthal, and Catherine Ghosh, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Christina Clark, are in charge of the prosecution, with the assistance of Paralegal Specialists Arjun Ahuja, Jayda Foote, and Braden Florczyk, and former Paralegal Specialists Connor Hamill and Rachel Wechsler.

Defendant	Age	Convictions	Sentence
ROBERT MENENDEZ	71	Conspiracy to commit bribery, conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud, conspiracy to commit extortion under color of official right, two counts of conspiracy to obstruct justice, two counts of bribery, three counts of honest services wire fraud, three counts of extortion under color of official right, conspiracy for a public official to act as a foreign agent, public official acting as foreign agent, and obstruction of justice. ^[2]	11 years; \$922,188.10 forfeiture
Wael Hana, a/k/a “Will Hana”	41	Conspiracy to commit bribery, conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud, bribery, two counts of honest services wire fraud, and conspiracy for a public official to act as a foreign agent. ^[3]	97 months in prison; \$1,250,000 fine; \$125,000 forfeiture
FRED DAIBES	67	Conspiracy to commit bribery while released on bail, conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud while released on bail, conspiracy to obstruct justice, two counts of bribery while released on bail, two counts of honest services wire fraud while released on bail.	7 years in prison; \$1,750,000 fine

^[1] With respect to Nadine Menendez, against whom charges remain pending, the entirety of the text of the Indictment and the description of the Indictment set forth herein constitute only allegations, and every fact should be treated as an allegation.

^[2] The Court ruled that MENENDEZ’s conspiracy for a public official to act as a foreign agent charge was subsumed by the bribery conspiracy count, and did not impose a separate sentence for it.

^[3] As with MENENDEZ, the Court ruled that HANA’s conspiracy for a public official to act as a foreign agent charge was subsumed by the bribery conspiracy count, and did not impose a separate sentence for it.

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PUBLIC CORRUPTION

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