

CBS Evening News

12/03/25

6:39:26 p.m.

2 minutes and 49 seconds

MAURICE DUBOIS: We turn now to President Trump's latest attacks on Somali immigrants in Minnesota. About 84,000 people of Somali descent live in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. The President says he doesn't want any Somalis living in the U.S. after a few dozen were implicated in a COVID relief fraud case. We get more on this from Jonah Kaplan of CBS Minnesota.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Fraud Allegations; Minnesota Targeted in Several Federal Investigations]

JONAH KAPLAN: Minnesota is reeling from a fraud scandal involving \$1 billion siphoned from multiple federal programs during the COVID pandemic. In the past three years, 87 people have been charged, 61 convicted, most of Somali descent. Erica MacDonald was U.S. attorney for the district of Minnesota during the first Trump administration. [TO MACDONALD] What happened in Minnesota where fraud was able to run rampant that it didn't in other states?

ERICA MACDONALD: Lack of accountability, frankly. We knew that fraud occurs and there's warning signs that come with it, and they were ignored in this case.

KAPLAN: According to investigators, the schemes involved bogus receipts and invoices for meal programs, housing assistance and behavioral health services, charging the state millions for services that were never provided.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: I hear they ripped off, Somalians ripped off that state for billions of dollars.

KAPLAN: The President lashed out at Minnesota's Somali community during Tuesday's Cabinet meeting at the White House, saying he doesn't want them in the country and called them garbage.

MINNEAPOLIS COUNCILMAN JAMAL OSMAN: I think it's a beautiful country.

KAPLAN: Jamal Osman, who moved from Somalia to Minnesota when he was 14, is a naturalized U.S. citizen and a member of the Minneapolis City Council.

OSMAN: Anyone who looks like me are scared right now.

H KAPLAN: The fear comes as the Somali community here is bracing for a surge of ICE agents cracking down on migrants who've been issued final deportation orders. [TO OSMAN] The President is pointing to the fraud cases in Minnesota, and we know that a majority of the suspects are of Somali descent. How is your community taking that?

OSMAN: Well, my community is upset. Yes, people commit crimes, but the entire community should not be blamed based on what some individuals did.

KAPLAN: Some House Republicans on an Oversight Committee in Washington announcing in a news release they're launching their own investigation into the allegations of fraud and accusations that some of that money could have been funneled directly to terror groups overseas, but I spoke with a number of federal investigators, and they tell me there is no evidence that that happened. Instead, the fraudsters allegedly stole the money and kept it for themselves and spent it on things like cars, houses, diamonds, and so much more, Maurice.

DUBOIS: Okay, many thanks, Jonah Kaplan, in Minneapolis tonight.