

CBS Mornings

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10 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Immigration Crackdown in New Orleans & Minneapolis]

TONY DOKOUPIL: It comes as the President continues to criticize Somali Americans as well living in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and agents cracking down in that community as well. We've got correspondents in both cities.

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7:11:45 a.m.

2 minutes and 41 seconds

KATI WEIS: Now a similar operation is under way in Minneapolis, and that's where we find my colleague Jonah Kaplan. Jonah, good morning.

JONAH KAPLAN: Kati, good morning. This is also a community on edge. There are roughly 80,000 Somalis living here in the area, and their leaders are warning that they're being unfairly blamed and targeted because of a fraud scandal worth more than \$1 billion that have implicated more than a dozen Somalis. 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. This week, the president has repeatedly lashed out at Minnesota's Somali community.

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

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.

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: Republicans on the House Oversight Committee in Washington are also announcing in a news release, their own investigation into the fraud and whether some of that money — stolen money could have made its way to terrorists overseas. I spoke with several federal investigators. They say there's no evidence that happened. Instead they say, Nate, that the fraudsters pocketed the money for their own use, bought cars, trips, diamonds and so much more.

NATE BURLESON: All right, Jonah, thank you. And I appreciate you braving the elements cause I know how cold it is in Minneapolis.