


# Feds probe hundreds of millions in suspected Somali cash in luggage leaving Minneapolis airport

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By [John Solomon](#)

Officials said most of the cash detected in luggage involved a small number of money couriers of Somali descent. The routine routes were to Dubai via Amsterdam, usually from Minneapolis but other times from Seattle, Dallas, Columbus and Atlanta.

The Transportation Security Administration flagged nearly \$700 million in cash detected in passengers' luggage leaving the Minneapolis airport the last two years, a massive cash exodus believed to be tied to Somali immigrants and their money couriers, Homeland Security officials told *Just the News*.

The officials said the cash movements out of Minnesota's largest airport began about a decade ago – around the time Democrat Gov. Tim Walz took office – and has grown substantially in recent years.

Though all were legally declared according to U.S. Customs rules, the bundles of cash in luggage – some as much as \$1 million in a single trip – raised regular suspicions among TSA agents.

The mountain of dollars leaving the country is now being investigated by the Homeland Security Investigations unit as part of a broader probe into a multibillion dollar fraud scheme centered around the state's Somali immigrant community, where dozens have been charged with or convicted of federal crimes.

In March of last year, a federal jury convicted the head of the now-defunct organization Feeding our Future in Minnesota for what prosecutors called the largest-ever fraud of pandemic aid, which involved \$250 million, [the BBC reported](#).

## **\$349.4 million in cash discovered leaving Minneapolis in 2025**

Officials said most of the dollars detected in luggage involved a small number of money couriers of Somali descent who took routine routes to Dubai via Amsterdam, usually from Minneapolis but other times from Seattle, Dallas, Columbus and Atlanta.

Minneapolis travelers alone had \$342.37 million in their luggage in 2024 and \$349.4 million in 2025, and the totals nationwide are likely to be much higher, the officials told *Just the News*.

TSA agents routinely flagged the cash movements to Customs and Border Protection and Homeland Security Investigations, but there was little curiosity during the Biden administration, and investigations into the nature and players only began recently since Donald Trump returned to the White House, the officials told *Just the News*.

One senior official who declined to be identified but has first-hand knowledge of the issue told *Just the News* that there wasn't much that could be done because the couriers always had their paperwork in order. But there were concerns about what was going on, and it may take Congress to change laws for federal authorities to get to the bottom of it or to stop it.

Another official said that when federal officials inquired with Minnesota officials, they often got accused of being racists by asking questions about Somali immigrants.

Federal and state law enforcement officials said the Somali cash flows were well known in counterterrorism circles since the 2016-18 timeframe because of concerns some of the money might head to al-Qaeda offshoot groups like Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, but most tracking of the money ended when the money reached Dubai because of a lack of interest and curiosity during the Biden administration even as the transfers grew in size.

#### **Possibly part of a much larger system**

The Somali couriers are believed to be part of a much larger system in which legal and illegal immigrants are moving tens of billions of dollars a year out of the United States via flights or remittance payment vendors.

Missouri State Treasurer Vivek Malek told *Just the News* more than \$200 billion leaves the United States annually through remittances, with Mexico alone receiving over \$52 billion and billions more heading to China, the Middle East and African nations. Some sizable portion of that involves illegal immigrants, most of whom crossed the border during the Biden years, he said.

"It has been found that at least \$4.4 billion in remittances sent to Mexico have been tied to cartel money laundering through small wire transfers," he said.

"Cartels don't sneak money across the border or throw the bag across the border.

They wire it. And if we are serious about crushing cartels, we have to shut down their financial arteries."

Malek is teaming up with his state legislature to impose new requirements that remittance payment businesses ensure that customers are lawfully in the United States before they can send money to foreign countries, and he hopes other states will follow suit.

"Missouri is stepping up by cutting off one of the biggest remaining incentives for illegal immigration, which is unverified foreign money transfers, because the economy is something that drives everybody to come to the United States," Malek said in a wide-ranging interview with the *John Solomon Reports* podcast last week.

"I'm making this distinction very clear: legal versus illegal immigration. I am all for legal immigration. I am not for illegal immigration. And what we saw is the diversity of the last four years, during the Biden administration, the floodgates were open on the southern border," he added.

Federal officials told *Just the News* that TSA and other agencies don't have significant authority to intervene or stop big cash movements on flights if Customs declarations paperwork is properly filled out, and it may take action by Congress to create new tracking and stoppage tools.

"If you or I try to go through an airport, and we had \$10,000 in cash without declaring it, we'd be arrested," said Fred Fleitz, a former CIA analyst and National Security Council chief of staff. "It's a serious violation because it's linked to criminal activity, and it's absolutely clear that the Biden administration knew that this was going on, and they were looking the other way.

It was part of their efforts to change the demographics of this country by encouraging illegal migration," he added.

Rep. Jeff Crank, R-Colo., told the *Just the News*, No Noise television show on Tuesday night that he believes the current Minnesota fraud scandal will embolden Congress to make changes to the law to give federal authorities more power to investigate the exodus of U.S. money to foreign countries, especially from illegal aliens.

"We have to do it. It's embarrassing that Congress hasn't done this before," Crank said. "These are financial controls that any company would have on corporate money. Any good company would have it. The board of directors would fire them

if they didn't. I don't know why in the world we wouldn't have those kinds of controls."

Trump has repeatedly raised concerns about the Somali immigrant fraud scheme in Minnesota and his administration has dispatched hundreds of FBI, HIS and IRS agents to investigate. More than 90 defendants – most of Somali descent – have already been indicted.

"Somalian gangs are roving the streets looking for 'prey' as our wonderful people stay locked in their apartments and houses hoping against hope that they will be left alone," [Trump wrote on social media](#).

Retired FBI Special Agent Jonathan Gilliam told *Just the News* that investigators are likely tracking the payments to the immigrants who gave the monies to remittance vendors or cash couriers, an important step to determining whether any transactions have nefarious intent.

"I think it's very important, John, where you track it to, is going to take it back to where it first started. I think when you look at the ... orchestrated migration that occurred across our southern border that was not people running from a war zone. That wasn't, you know, people seeking asylum, because there are all kinds of things happening below us. It's just people come from all over the world because they were told, and it was broadcast, the southern border is open."

**Walz: "Demonizing an entire community"**

Defenders of the Somali community – like Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz – claim the recent concerns about billions in fraud schemes and the cash movements are overblown by President Donald Trump and that most in the Somali immigrant community are good Americans.

"As far as demonizing our Somali community, maybe, he could help us on some things," [Walz told NBC](#) recently, referring to Trump. "Demonizing an entire community, folks who are in the professions, educators, artists, doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, they bring the diversity and the energy to a place like Minnesota.

"And for him to just randomly decide to do this, it makes no sense. Do your job. Get the criminals out. Secure our border. But do it with dignity and respect to the American tradition of respecting immigrants as refugees as a beacon of hope."