

Obama Administration Vetting May Have Missed Ohio State Attacker's Ties to Islamists

The Senate Judiciary Committee is less than impressed with the Obama Administration's vetting process for refugees, particularly following the recent attack on the Ohio State University campus.

Abdul Razak Ali Artan, the man behind the November attack, arrived in the United States with his mother and six siblings as refugees originally from Somalia in 2013, according to documents obtained by the committee. During the refugee vetting process, Artan's mother indicated that she was seeking refugee status in part because she feared the terrorist group Al-Shabbah would kidnap and recruit her children.

"This claim should have triggered additional vetting for the older children, including Artan, to determine what, if any, interactions they may have had with the terrorist organization," a press release from the committee stated. "However, this additional vetting apparently didn't happen.

"Additionally, government forms used in the 2013 vetting interview appear to be from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which was replaced by the Department of Homeland Security in 2002. It's unclear whether the forms used in the interview excluded certain fields that may have been required in the 2013 version of the forms, leading to an incomplete review."

Federal investigators believe Artan, who was killed by law enforcement after he drove his vehicle into a crowd and then began slashing people with a knife, was inspired by ISIS and the radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki.

In a letter to Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, the committee's chairman, Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), is seeking the immigration and criminal histories of Artan's mother and siblings as well as records related to the interview conducted with Artan's mother to evaluate her request for refugee status. He also strongly urged the department to ensure up-to-date forms are being used to document proper vetting.

Grassley said he had previously requested Artan's immigration and criminal history in November. {eo}